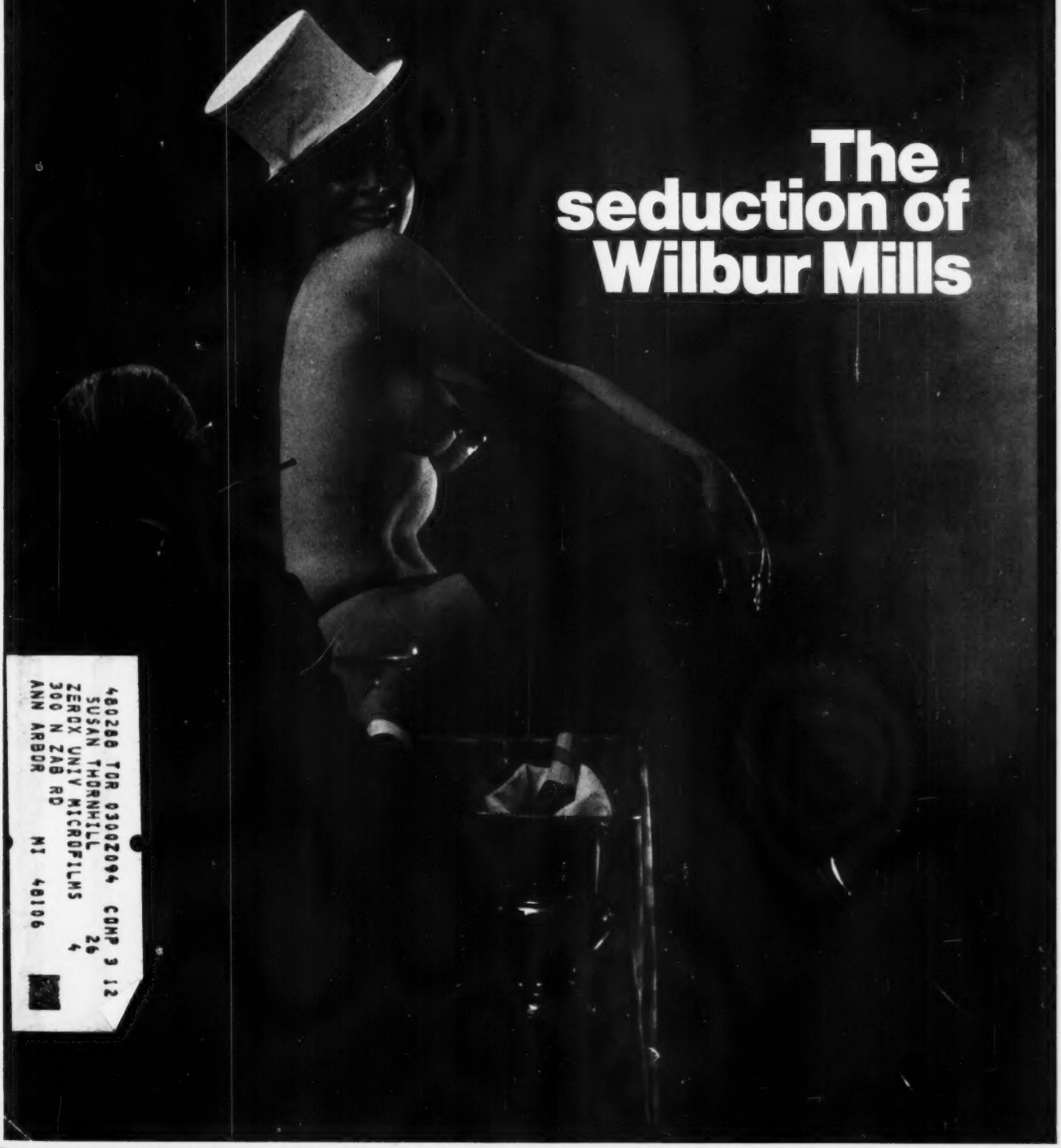
DECEMBER 27, 1974 / 60 CENTS

THE FEATURE NEWS MAGAZINE

NEW TIMES



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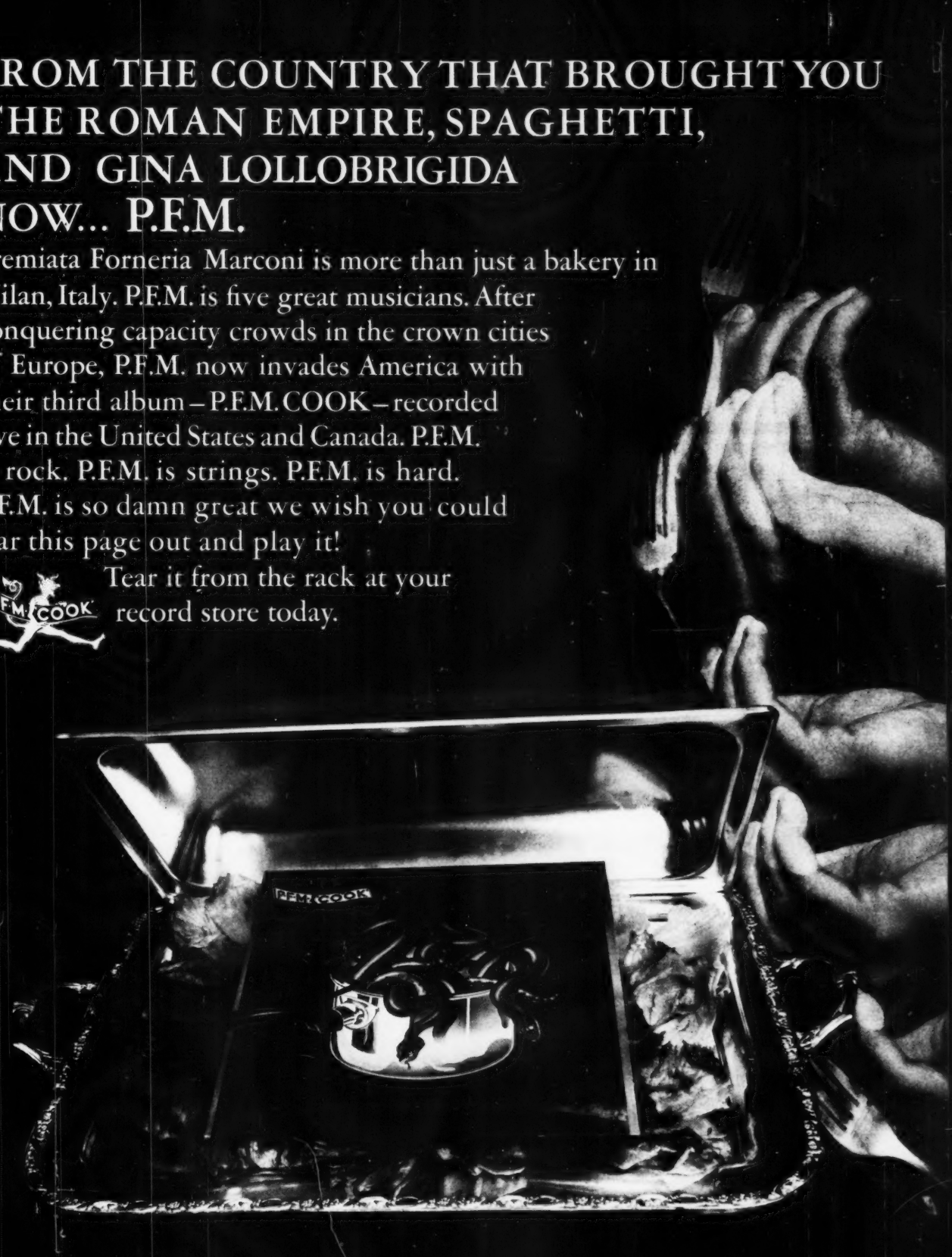

See P.F.M. COOK live at the Capitol Theatre in Passaic, N.J. on December 21, 1974

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NEW TIMES, December 27, 1974, Volume 3, Number 13

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COVER PORTRAIT OF ANNABELLA BATTISTELLA BY CARL FISCHER

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Illustrations for "Attention: Smoking May Be Good For Your Health," Dec. 13, 1974 Issue by Martin Hoffman.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Foxy Fanne, formerly Fanne Foxe,and before that Annabella Battistella, was two hours late for the appointment to shoot this issue's cover. That, said photographer Carl Fischer, was one hour and fifty-five minutes later than Barbra Streisand had been to shoot an *Esquire* picture. In fact, said Fischer, "It was later than any celebrity I have ever photographed." To make matters worse, it then took Annabella another two hours to dress—if that is the proper term. Perhaps it was simply a sign of the times. If, as Andy Warhol maintains, contemporary man has only five minutes in which to be famous, Annabella has already reached superstar category; for the week or two that she is likely

Marshall Frady

to remain in the news, Annabella can pull rank over any Hollywood queen.

The notion of posing Annabella à la *The Blue Angel*, first suggested by our movie reviewer, Frank Rich, struck Contributing Editor Marshall Frady just right. Frady had covered Annabella's opening at the Pilgrim in Boston, and had already seized upon the parallels to the movie as the theme of his article; he even suggested a few frills of his own: the magnum of champagne and the typical cigarette holder-cum-cigarello that Mills' stand-in—a paid model—is holding.

* * *

While Frady was putting the finishing touches to the cover story (and Mills the finishing touches to his career), Robert Sam Anson was flying back from Kansas City with his first story for *New Times* since signing on as our national political correspondent. In the last seven months, Anson has free-lanced six articles for the magazine: "The Irish Connection," which detailed discrimination in the Catholic Church; "Babies for Sale," a look at the black market in babies for adoption; "A Parallax View of History," in which he pondered what would have happened if George McGovern *had* been elected; "That Championship Season," an expose of the sex scandal that decimated the Notre Dame football team; "The anti-politician," a profile of Ramsey Clark; and, most recently, "Southie is my home town," a sympathetic look at the other side of Boston's busing controversy, which drew angry letters accusing the magazine of being both too sympathetic and too tough on Southie.

The only writer for *New Times* who has

Robert Sam Anson

been as prolific is Contributing Editor Larry L. King. King has been appearing in the magazine since its inception, but there were still too many issues that went to press without him. To solve the problem, the editors invited King to write a regular column. The name for it was supplied by the author himself: Fulminations. When King first suggested the title, there were those in the office who found it rather opaque, but the word finally prevailed. Webster's speaks of thunder and lightning, sudden violent explosions, denunciations, explosive salts. Perhaps. But to us, the word simply means that King gets his rocks off once every two weeks—with considerable literary style.

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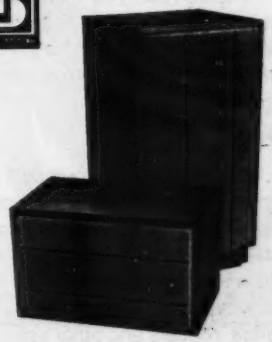

CLIPPINGS

One Helluva Ford

Just before President Ford was to land at a U.S. Army outpost in South Korea, Maj. Gen. Henry (Gunfighter) Emerson and Lt. Gen. James (79er) Hollingsworth gave the troops a little pep talk. Gen. Emerson began: "America is second to no country in the world, and we want this man [Ford] to know it.

"There are press here and I'd better watch what I say and I won't use any profanity, but I am pretty [censored] proud of you guys. You are the best.

"Ford is a helluva man, an all-American football player. I guess that tells you what kind of man he is. He took office in a very difficult circumstance. He is pulling our country back together and pulling the world together.

"He's going to leave here and he's going to Communist Russia. And we're not worth a damn if we can't back one man with our one purpose. The last thing he sees before he goes to Russia will be the Second Division.

"Take it from here, 79er."

"Thanks, Gunfighter. Thank you for reminding me that the press is here. In my 34 years of service, my greatest enemy has been the press.

"It is nothing but right when the President of the United States goes to Communist Russia that he sees what the hell he's got behind him. The commander-in-chief is one helluva man. That's it. Take it from here, Gunfighter."

"Thanks 79er. You know, 79er is the only man in the Army with more medals than I have, but then, you know, he is seven years older."—from the Chicago *Sun-Times*

Be Prepared

With its diminishing numbers and national scandal about faked rolls and tricks at the Jamborees, the Boy Scouts of America can look to Texas for some warmth in the cool spell. Explorer Post 1066 is a healthy unit of 25 rapists, murderers, robbers and other assorted felons inside Ferguson Penitentiary.—from the *National Enquirer*

Real Bite

The police didn't have much to go on in tracking down the killer of Lovey Benovsky, a 73-year-old landlady who was stabbed and strangled last February. Her nose was bitten off. Ah hah. The police got a mouthprint from Walter E. Marx, one of Mrs. Benovsky's tenants, compared it with the bite out of Mrs. Benovsky's nose, and . . . Marx was found guilty of the crime.—from the Los Angeles *Times*

A Davis Is a Davis Davis Is a . . .

There are 3,000 people in Loreto, Mexico, a town in Baja California. One thousand of them are named Davis, sometimes more than once. In Latin America the family name of the father and the family name of the mother are always used. Several men in Loreto are named Davis Davis Davis. There is even one Davis Davis Davis Davis. Everyone in Loreto calls him that. Streets, markets, practically everything in the town is named Davis. The baseball team is named Davis. Everyone on the team is named Davis. The pitcher is Loreto Davis, the center fielder is Davis Davis Davis, and so on. Think of the boxscore. . . . An adventurer named Lukas Davis for some reason came to Loreto early in the 19th century, married Susanna Real and started the Davis explosion. One more thing: in Loreto it's pronounced Dah-veez.—from the Miami *Herald* (LAT service)

Help!

Las Vegas police found Derek Alvin McCall, 21, of Los Angeles draped over the hood of a car. He was sleeping the sleep of the righteous, but he was charged with rape, robbery, abduction and some other assorted crimes. Seems that McCall broke into a house in Las Vegas and took the woman away while her two children slept in another room. McCall drove to a spot—these are usually *secluded*—and tried to rape the woman. She testified in court that "the grip on my arms loosened." The man began to snore. "I saw that he was asleep," she said. She slipped away.—from the Associated Press

Leo the Loo

Lion Country Safari at Laguna Hills, California, and its partner in Georgia, is cleaning up in a new sideline: lion dung. Lion dung is not only a good fertilizer but it keeps animals away from crops and out of orchards. Lion fear. "Not only do deer stay away," said Jerry Kobrin, Safari vice-president, "but so do the neighbors." Safari sells a 10-pound bag of its ferocious manure for $5. It's called "Lion Dandies."—from *California Business*

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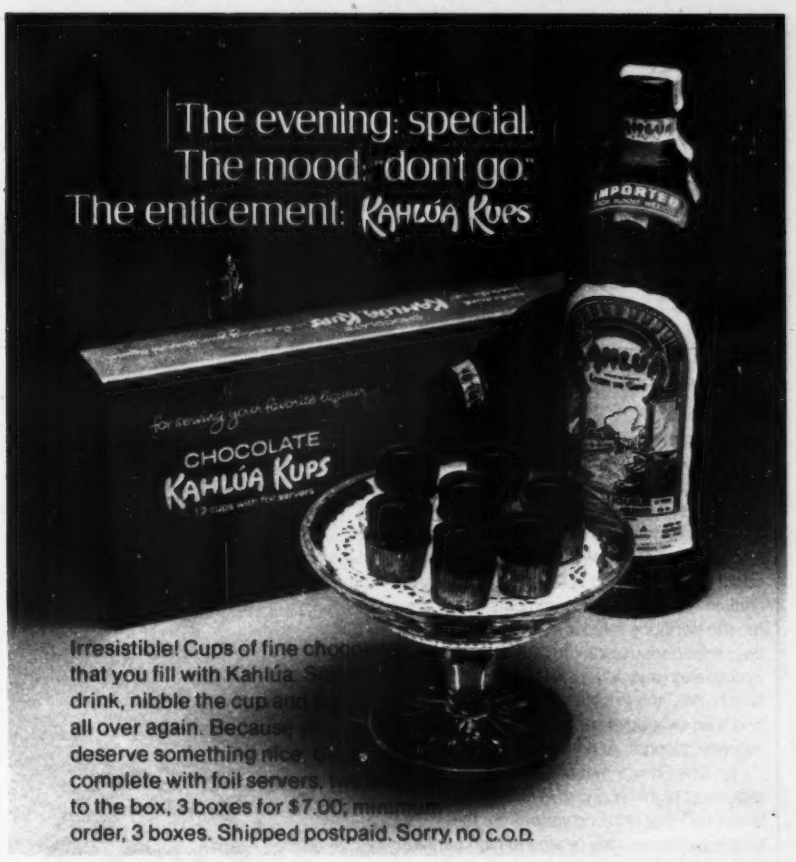
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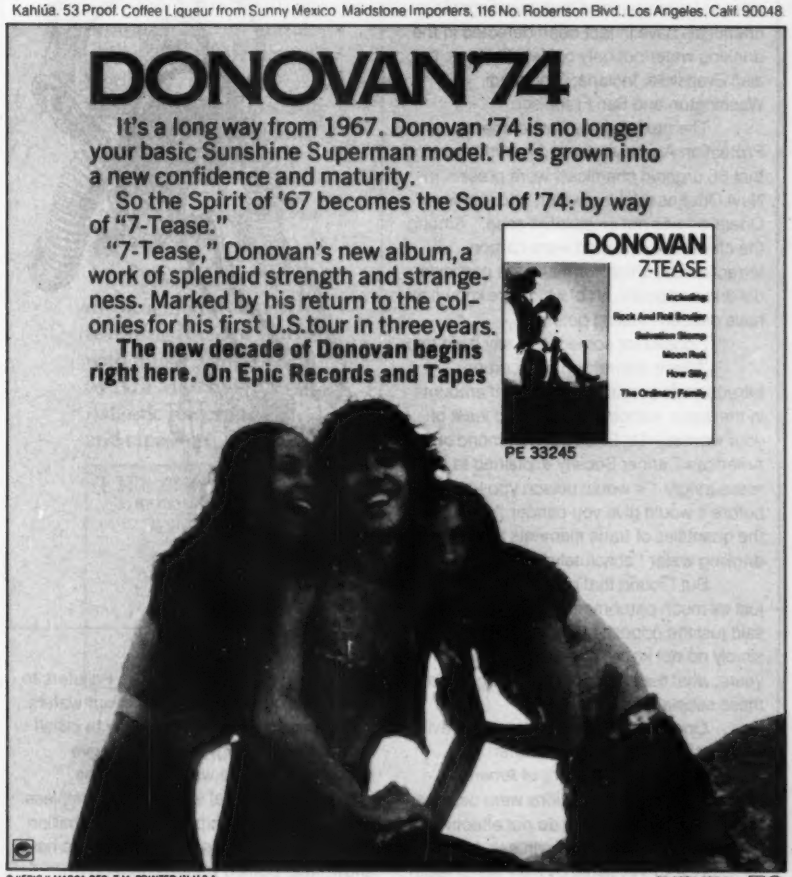
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Water?

SLOW DOWN

By James S. Kunen

I knew it would come to this.

Now they say drinking *water* may cause cancer.

First it was strontium 90 in our milk; then we got the word on cigarette smoking and air pollution. Then came the bad news about pesticides, and spray deodorants, and sodium nitrate in preserved meats, and growth hormone residue in beef, and then beef itself because it's too fatty; and then cyclamates (and now they think maybe saccharin), and brighteners in detergents, and then excessive sunbathing; and most recently, alcohol. And now *water*.

The Environmental Defense Fund reported "highly suggestive statistical evidence" that drinking water from the Mississippi is causally related to high cancer rates in Louisiana; and that carcinogenic chemicals have in fact been detected in the drinking water not only of New Orleans, but also Evansville, Indiana; Cincinnati, Washington and San Francisco.

The next day the Environmental Protection Agency released a study showing that 66 organic chemicals were present in New Orleans drinking water, and that New Orleans "was not an isolated case." Among the chemicals detected were carbon tetrachloride, chloroform and the pesticides dieldrin and endrin, all of which are known to have cancer-causing potential.

I looked for someone to say it ain't so.

"Were chloroform and carbon tetrachloride present in significant amounts in the water, cancer would be the least of your worries," Dr. E. Cuyler Hammond of the American Cancer Society explained to me, reassuringly. "It would poison you long before it would give you cancer." He called the quantities of trace elements found in drinking water "absolutely trivial."

But I found that other scientists, with just as much parchment on the wall as he, said just the opposite. The truth is, "they" simply do not know, and will not know for years, what the effects of lifelong ingestion of these substances are.

One thing is for sure: there is a lavish smorgasbord of crap in our water.

Ninety to 95 percent of American water purification installations were designed to kill bacteria only. They do not effectively remove toxic chemicals or viruses. In a nationwide survey taken by the Public Health Service in 1969, 36 percent of samples taken from consumers' taps contained at least one contaminant in amounts exceeding drinking water standards.

What, you may ask, can you do about it?

Nothing.

You could enlist in the quixotic battle of the Naderite dreamers to rally the slow-to-anger, endlessly patient, infinitely forgiving American People to compel the Polluters to stop dumping their vile waste in our waters. You could agitate to get your city to install available technology that can remove chemicals from the water. But on the immediate, personal level, you are helpless.

You could chip into the $100 million annual sales of bottled water, but tests have shown that bottled water is generally no better, and often worse, than tap water. Sometimes it *is* tap water.

You could put an activated charcoal filter on your tap. It will trap bacteria—and provide them a cozy place to multiply to dangerous levels.

Since you can't avoid drinking iffy water, your only room for maneuver is in choosing a way to look at it.

A very positive example was set by Dr. Doris Thompson, director of New Orleans' city health department, who rushed into the breach after the Mississippi reports to declare that driving a car is more dangerous than drinking the city's tap water. If that's the case, based on National Safety Council figures the average water drinker will have an accident *less than* once in four years, or 40,000 miles. One might add that it's probably more dangerous to raft down the Colorado River than to drink from it. And, of course, drinking from Niagara Falls is a piece of cake compared to going over them in a barrel. When you look at it that way, things aren't so bad.

Robert Hilbert, head of the American Waterworks Association, has the right idea. He struck back at the alarmists by raising a timely question:

"Do we really need water of absolute purity?" he asked. "May that, in itself, not pose other dangers not unlike those of a sterile environment for which we develop no resistance or immunity?"

Indeed. Perhaps it's time we took a hard look at this post-Watergate compulsion for cleanliness that is sweeping the nation. Do we really want an anal America, neat as a pin, everything just so? America wasn't made great by people who'd slow up over a little shit in their water. Learn to live with it. Tolerate a little ambiguity. Take a chance. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. We're all in the same boat, in the same water. Maybe the common danger can bring us together. Blood's thicker than water—so's the Mississippi! So? It'll make you tough. Strength through adversity. "The finest steel goes through the hottest fire," someone once said.

Sure, water didn't use to be poisonous. But people used to get eaten by bears, attacked by natives, hit by chamber pots. Something out there's going to get you. It's just one of the inherent drawbacks of being a mortal.

Next time you quaff a dose off the bubbler, think of it as a mixed drink.

L'chai'im!

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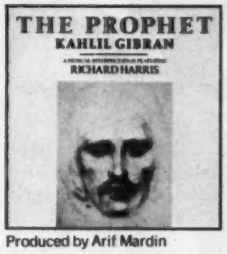

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THE FEATURE NEWS MAGAZINE

Merry Christmas and a Happy NEW TIMES

Lost in the time warp

FULMINATIONS

By Larry L. King

Gee, fellow Americans, the past fortnight has provided such varied shows one feels caught in a time warp.

National Democrats, traditional bloodletters and natural kamikaze pilots when walking among their own, conducted their off-year mini-convention at Kansas City in such decorum one felt all the political excitements, turmoil and inspirations of the Eisenhower years.

Dr. Hank Kissinger, the folksiest secretary of state since John Foster Dulles, issued a pronouncement calling to mind the favorite preachments of Lyndon Johnson.

Congressional young turks (with a helping hand from Wilbur Mills, who himself brought back memories of vaudeville) amazed in taking us back to the age of deposed kings and, maybe, gave us a glimpse of the immediate political future.

The economy, of course, continued to recall to mind Herbert Hoover.

Only President Jerry Ford—on one of his rare visits to the United States—reminded us of the present in that he made it easy to forget we ever had a Jefferson, a Lincoln and two Roosevelts.

To report the specifics:

• Democrats exhibited Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago voting with blacks, women, the young and other natural political minorities beaten up in his toddling town in '68; Bob Strauss, Democratic national chairman, welcomed Mayor Daley in from the political cold of 1972 with a kiss in the name of party unity. Everybody held hands and sang of how good it was to have all Democrats together again under the Great Umbrella; it was dull theater, and alarming to nostalgia buffs, until Mayor Daley put it in prospective by saying, "A resolution's just words on paper. Electing a president is what's important." Translation: idealism's hunky-dory in the off-year, mates, but don't forget to bring your knives when it counts. There is yet hope for unreconstructed Southerners and labor's fat boys in the Democratic Party.

• "Trustz uz," Dr. Kizzinger zaid. He zaid ve might peril detante wiz our pals-zee Ruzzianz by criticizing zee vunderful dizarmament plan under which each side gets to keep only enough giant nuclear mizzles and varheads to blow up zee world only 11 or 12 times over. Ziz vould harm vorld peace. Nervous Nellies of another time will recall being asked to trust LBJ if we wanted everything to turn out swell in Vietnam.

• Infused with new blood, the House of Representatives—next to Lawrence Welk's band, the least likely of revolutionary units—is flexing new muscle on both sides of the aisle; even Republicans in caucus chose moderates-to-liberals. Democrats got most of their attention in deposing ole Wilbah, but that was only the cake's icing. They are rigging the committees more in democracy's favor,

and have put President Seconal on notice they intend to disturb his sleep by their own lawful acts. A visitor to Washington these days finds a thin current of panic running through the body politic, a sense that if Congress doesn't do it nobody will. All this goes against tradition, history and congressional instincts. But they are angry on Capitol Hill, and afraid. Should the mood prevail—and where on the horizon do you see the natural upturn of events to shatter it?—then Congress may astonish and amaze us all by a rare display of authority. "It's sink or swim for the next couple of years," says Congressman Morris Udall, a declared candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, "and nearly everybody up here knows it. I imagine it was this way at a given point in the hold of the *Bounty*."

• Meanwhile, President Blah shows signs of noticing small corners of the world around him. Not that he's offered much on his own, of course, but it's finally seeped in under the helmet that maybe the nation needs more than WIN buttons and citizens who eat all they take on their plates. Yes, he said, he guessed maybe we were in a recession, sort of. And yeah, maybe we ought to think about having some sort of mandatory energy-conservation plan. And, un-huh, perhaps it would be wise to go along with congressional urges toward spending $2 billion on quick jobless aid rather than wait around until the bread lines are a little longer, the soup kitchens a bit fuller. I'm telling you, friends, that's real leadership these days. Take two aspirin, get a good night's sleep, and call me if you don't feel better by morning.

Can Scoop break up his affair with labor?

THE INSIDER

POWER POLITICS

Scoop's labor problem

As a result of the Democratic mini-convention in Kansas City, Sen. Henry Jackson has been advised by his highly respected political strategist, Bob Keefe, that he must urgently separate himself from the old-line AFL-CIO labor leaders if he is going to have a serious chance at the presidential nomination. Apparently Keefe got an earful from die-hard liberals at Kansas City, threatening they would walk out on the Democratic Party if Jackson were nominated because of his close ties with the likes of union boss George Meany and his abrasive political chief Al Barkan.

The first indication that Jackson is ready to follow this advice is that he supported the compromise on the convention's affirmative action plank, which Meany and Barkan had strongly opposed. And Jackson is expected to take more action in the future to show his independence from labor's official position on the issues.

Barkan up the wrong tree

Rumors have been floating around Washington for several weeks that Al Barkan, the powerful head of the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education (COPE), is about to be bounced out of his job. The talk suggests that Barkan has lost the confidence of at least some moderate members of the union board because of his inability to work with Democratic National Chairman Bob Strauss. Other board members are said to be concerned with several labor setbacks in the last Congress, while union liberals have never been happy with Barkan. No one closely connected to the board is giving solid indications of Barkan's future, but at least one board member said recently that he "would expect some action on Barkan's position before the end of January."

If not Mo, what about Gaylord?

Whatever their victories at Kansas City, the liberal Democrats are still casting about for a viable presidential candidate. Mondale and Kennedy are out, Mo Udall is in—at least for now. But what if Udall can't get his candidacy off the ground? Who then?

One likely candidate to step in is Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, 58, just reelected to his third term by 63 percent of the vote, a liberal who falls somewhere between McGovern and Muskie and one who is enormously (and uniquely) popular with labor.

So far Nelson himself has not made a move. But a committee to promote his candidacy has already formed, including UAW head Leonard Woodcock, deposed Sen. William Fulbright, Wisconsin AFL-CIO head John Schmidt and Wisconsin state senator and leading liberal activist Midge Miller. While Nelson talked the committee out of officially registering itself in Madison for the moment, he will probably enter the pivotal Wisconsin presidential primary, where there is no question he can win as a favorite son if nothing more. In any case, it will take some sort of draft movement to get him afloat.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHUCK KNEYSE

Barkan: anathema to liberals

WIDE WORLD

Nelson: next in line

Nelson is George McGovern's closest friend in the Senate, and the former Democratic candidate for president, according to a member of his staff, "will likely support him." In contrast to McGovern, however, Nelson is reputed to have a good sense of humor, to be an impressive campaigner and a man of confidence and conviction. Said one former McGovern staffer, "Gaylord Nelson is George McGovern with hair on his chest."

Ford's Machiavelli

A number of White House staffers have been industriously spreading the word that Defense Secretary James Schlesinger is on shaky ground with President Ford. According to several Administration sources, the man behind this whispering campaign—as well as the earlier move to fire Alexander Haig—is top Ford aide Robert Hartmann.

More than a few White House staffers see the anti-Schlesinger campaign as one more aspect of the growing fight between Hartmann and Ford aide Donald Rumsfeld for the top spot on the staff. Hartmann is trying to dump Schlesinger, the theory goes, so that Rumsfeld will be shifted to Defense—giving Hartmann a clear field at the White House. Rumsfeld has expressed a desire for the Pentagon

WIDE WORLD

Hartmann: can he be that devious?

slot. "It may sound just too devious," says one White House aide, "but that seems to be what's going on."

The advantages of being President

Friends of Tip O'Neill, House majority leader, say he confides this story these days:

Shortly after Jerry Ford became President, he invited old friend O'Neill to play golf. Once the photographs had been taken and newsmen and hangers-on banished, the President asked Congressman O'Neill into his limousine for a private chat. O'Neill's first thought was that his former House colleague wanted to discuss affairs of state. Once the doors closed and the official lackeys had bowed themselves away, the President of the United States—with a pleased grin—said, "Jesus, Tip, do you realize how much my damn *pension* is gonna be now?"

UPI

Tip and Jerry: playing all the angles

MEDIA

AM America hard up for talent

ABC, which launches its *AM America* show on January 6 to combat NBC's *Today Show*, is trying to coax President Ford into being a guest on the first program. Ford has been asked to engage in an on-the-air conversation with retiring Sen. Sam Ervin, who has been signed up to be a commentator on the show along with former New York Mayor John Lindsay and Elliot Richardson.

The end of the cash advance

Faced with a deluge of red ink, Macmillan has already announced widespread dismissals, and last week the employees of Harper & Row got their own form of bad news. President Winthrop Knolton called his editors together for what had been billed as a tough talk. Predicting that many publishers would go under, Knolton announced Harper's would live off its swollen list of outstanding manuscripts. With rare exception, no new books would be accepted for publication. Editors were ordered to draw up lists of delinquent authors who would be dunned for their cash advanced unless they could deliver their manuscripts.

The billion dollar magazine sweepstakes

Newsweek called the results gratifying and bought three full-page spreads in *Advertising Age* to trumpet the good news. *Time* scoffed at the results and offered to help finance new methods of measuring magazine readership. Even by Madison Avenue's jaded yardstick, the latest Simmons Study—the Nielsen ratings of the magazine business—which was released just before Halloween, was the monster of the season and not by dint of sheer size alone; the exhaustive breakdown of magazine readers into every conceivable category from their income to their deodorant is contained in 19 thick looseleaf binders (costing subscribers about $70,000).

What had *Newsweek* crowing and *Time* complaining was the finding that, in terms of total pass-along readership, the two news weeklies are practically equal at 19-plus million readers apiece, despite the fact that *Newsweek*'s 3 million paid circulation is 64 percent of *Time*'s 4.65 million paid circulation. Since ad rates are pegged to paid circulation, *Newsweek* is thus charging less for the same payload: *Newsweek* is only $20,875 for a full page in black and white while *Time* gets $29,975. Suddenly *Newsweek*, whose reputation as a "hot book" had cooled in recent years, seems headed for a new charge of steam.

If Simmons' new figures on *Time* and *Newsweek* confused the world of media buyers, the radical changes in the Simmons figures for some other magazines were even more baffling. *Saturday Review/World*, according to Simmons, lost an incredible 50 percent of its readers in the past year; *Dun's Review* did almost as badly with a 49 percent drop; *Esquire*'s readership skidded 44 percent; and the combined readership of *Harper*'s and *Atlantic* fell 39 percent. Women's magazines, as a group, posted the biggest gains with *House Beautiful* jumping 50 percent in its total number of readers. Those figures, suggests Simmons president Paul Chook, reflect the popularity of how-to articles in a time of penury and not the failure of women's lib to emancipate housewives.

The problem is that the size of some of the total audience shifts reported by Simmons is so enormous that the study itself has come under fire. "This thing is so shot through with error that it is incredible," says Leon Garry, editor of the influential *Media Industry Newsletter*. However, despite the large discrepancies between Simmons' findings this year as against last year, the current Simmons is closer to its major competitor, Target Group Index, in many respects. This year's "winners" are using this to reinforce their argument that the new Simmons is more valid than ever.

Simmons derives its results from a sample of 15,000 readers who are interviewed personally. But critics like Garry contend that even that sample may be too small to ensure reliability and that Simmons' statistical methods are inadequate.

Simmons president Chook, of course, does not agree. He points out that the company has contributed $40,000 to have the study audited and that its books are open for inspection. More to the point, Chook attributes the discrepancies to substantial changes in society and within the magazine world itself. Some shifts could also have occurred, he suggests, by using the 1970 census and reducing the number

of magazines within the survey. Concludes Chook: "We've done a survey and we think we have done it well."

Meanwhile, the controversy mounts. Chook met with irate *Time* executives last week to explain his findings; at the same time National Distillers called in its three ad agencies to reconsider how to use syndicated research in planning this year's advertising strategy. Other companies are expected to ask the same questions. At stake is an estimated $1.3 billion that will be spent on magazine advertising this year alone.

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HEALTH

By Marlon Steinmann

The insomnia milk cure

There may be something to the notion that a glass of milk before bedtime helps prevent insomnia. Dr. Ernest Hartmann and colleagues at Boston State Hospital and Tufts University School of Medicine suspected that a substance called L-tryptophan—an amino acid found in meat and other proteins, as well as in milk—might be a natural sleep-inducer. They thus fed L-tryptophan or a placebo to 10 volunteers just before they bedded down for a night in a sleep lab. In each case, the men taking L-tryptophan fell asleep faster, and slept better, than those on the placebo.

"The glass or two of milk at bedtime, one of the oldest remedies for insomnia," writes Dr. Hartmann in the *Archives of General Psychiatry*, "could have a chemical basis in the L-tryptophan content of the milk." Also, he says, "An L-tryptophan effect appears . . . to be a more plausible explanation for sleepiness felt after a large meal than the standard explanation that 'blood leaves the head and goes to the gut.' "

No fault fat

If you have trouble keeping your weight down, it may not be your fault. Dr. Pierre Biron and associates at the University of Montreal have made a study of 274 Montreal families with both natural and adopted children. The researchers found that if the parents were overweight, only the natural children—not the adopted kids—were also likely to be fat.

Apparently, family tendencies to avoirdupois are a matter of genetics rather than environment. Calling the results of the study "startling," Dr. Biron says, "They suggest that the amount of food you offer to a child may not be the key determinant of whether he or she is likely to become overweight."

DDT count declines

A note of optimism concerning pollution: For years zoologist David Johnston of the University of Florida in Gainesville has been collecting carcasses of small songbirds killed when they flew into the tall TV towers near Tallahassee and Jacksonville on their annual fall migration south. Johnston has been analyzing the birds' fat each year for DDT and related compounds.

Over the five-year period from 1969 through 1973, he has found that the birds' DDT content has declined dramatically, from 17.80 parts per million in 1969, to 2.06 ppm in 1973.

Not for women only

That fertility drug that makes women produce quintuplets—clomiphene citrate—may work for some men, too. Dr. David Paulson of Duke University recently gave clomiphene to 22 men who were infertile because of inadequate sperm counts. After six months on the drug, 15 of the men achieved at least normal sperm counts, and three of them were subsequently able to impregnate their wives.

THE WORD

The Cher minus Sonny show

Once again, in a characteristic play of one-upmanship, Cher seems to have upstaged Sonny and gotten the final word. Sonny takes his final bow on ABC on Sunday, January 12, between 8:00 and 9:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, when *The Sonny Comedy Hour* will be officially canceled. (Jay Bernstein Associates, Sonny's press agent, says it may be even sooner than that.) Less than a month later, Cher premieres in her own hour variety show, ironically scheduled in almost the same time slot—Sunday, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on CBS.

If the two shows seem derivative of each other, it is probably because they are. In California, where both shows originate, the divorce laws split the couple's common property right down the middle. And Art Fisher, who directed the original *Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour,* has generously agreed to go both ways. Earlier this year, he directed the abortive *Sonny* show. And on February 9, Fisher switches to Cher, beginning with a one-hour special on February 9, featuring guest stars Elton John, Bette Midler and Flip Wilson. The special will be a lead-in to a weekly variety show that will closely follow the original format of *The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour.*

Meanwhile, Sonny, who has comeback plans for a solo nightclub act and dramatic roles on television, is on R and R for a month in Lake Tahoe.

WIDE WORLD

Cher: who needs Sonny?

Wilbur's blue angel

By Marshall Frady

From the very first word of that 2:00 a.m. vaudevillian imbroglio along the Tidal Basin, it was a matter that seemed peculiarly shadowed by ghosts of *The Blue Angel*: Wilbur Daigh Mills—the 65-year-old sober high bishop of the House's Ways and Means Committee, whose three decades as representative from a remote and piney district in the Arkansas outback had become a Washington legend of ponderous probity and circumspection—suddenly discovered sloshed, disheveled, raucous in a party of assorted night-folk including an hysterical Argentine stripper, his glasses splintered and his hominy-plain church-usher's face scratched, bleeding. There was something in the stunning, gaudy implausibility of that news that instantly evoked Sternberg's forlorn little melotragedy of the middle-aged German schoolmaster, grimly respectable and rectitudinous, bemused and eventually wrecked by his dazed mesmerization with a cabaret strumpet.

In another, larger sense, Mills was only the latest casualty of that strange general malaise that seems to have settled over the whole community of power in Washington. Something has been thrown treacherously askew in the customary patterns and physics of political fortunes there. It has been, for the last several years, a kind of protracted uncertain season of left-handed happenstances in the lives of its politicians—Kennedy, Agnew, the entire Nixon administration. It's as if perverse furies were loose in the air, randomly and inexplicably pillaging, like the dark angel passing over Pharaoh's Egypt.

For his colleagues, there were special disquieting omens in what befell Mills. No one answered more utterly to the deferences and discretions that make up that venerable etiquette ordering the House's inner society of power. And in his undoing, his lapse, were harrowing intimations of their own worst nightmares of vulnerability. A certain casual, furtive, compulsive rutting has long been a part of the whole culture of the town, the mere weather of power itself having always acted as one of the headiest of human aphrodisiacs. There was more than sheer compassion at play in the reluctance of most congressmen to even discourse on what had happened to Mills: it was like a *beshrei* superstition against tempting the notice of the fates by even discussing it.

"I have never," Wilbur Mills once offered, "been one for comedy"

Quiet, drab, unobtrusive, Mills was the consummate utterance of the House—a collection of men always more prosaically ordinary, closer to the everyday textures of inner America, than the proud glamoring stallions of the Senate. But even among this unprepossessing company, Mills was spectacular in his plainness. He tended to give the impression of being squatter, dumpier than he actually was. He had a bulky, lumpish face as common and homely as a sweet potato, with delicate gilt-frame bifocals and mineral-grey hair combed straight back, smooth and sleek and glistening, parted just slightly off-center. His sole debonair flair was a cigarette holder, which, with a Madison Little Cigar inserted into it, he would sip and twitch between his chunky fingers at various rakish angles.

Ever since the age of 7, rather than the usual boyhood fancies of being a cowboy or fireman or sailor, Mills was given to a single obsession—to be a member of the Ways and Means Committee. This rather grave aspiration he contracted, it seems, from the periodic visitations to his small town of the district's congressman, then a member of that committee, appearing like a demigod in the steams and clangor of a paused train out of the distant galaxy of power in Washington.

While working as a cashier in his father's bank and laboring to muster a law practice, he and Polly, a spare pale girl who was then the town's postmistress, concluded against the admonitions of their elders that they would get married. In what constituted up until a few years ago the most swashbuckling gesture of his life, they swooped off to the Albert Pike Hotel in Little Rock, and then promptly arose at 6:30 the next morning to return home and resume their respective duties.

Arriving in Washington in 1938, Mills was the most assiduous of apprentices in the myriad small wisdoms, wiles and fastidious civilities of the Hill's marbled catacombs of authority. Finally assuming the chairmanship of Ways and Means in 1958, he soon became, albeit inconspicuously, one of the most crucial figures in the Capitol. With no subcommittees and a standing House protocol that exempted his committee's bills from any amendments or tinkerings when presented to the floor, Mills presided al-

ILLUSTRATION BY BILL NELSON

Marshall Frady is a contributing editor of NEW TIMES.

ILLUSTRATION BY BILL NELSON

most single-handedly over the arrangements for financing the Republic. His hand was all the more decisive and forbidding in these determinations in that he had sedulously amassed an encyclopedic store of economic lore and expertise that ranged beyond the ken of almost everybody else in Washington: his eager appetite for the inert matter that constituted the fare of Ways and Means' sessions seemed inexhaustible. One committee member once explained, "He just keeps going, and going, and going. Dammit, he just *outlasts* everybody." At the same time, Mills would assemble, with a meticulous deliberation, complexities of consensus among the membership that would finally shape his legislative programs—a studious solicitude that over time also left him with a permanent ideological profile of prudent inconclusiveness.

There was something about his career on the Hill that suggested the patient, obscure diligence of a mole. However formidable his consequence, he always seemed the most unassuming of souls there—almost excrutiatingly deferential. Much of this reticence owed, it was generally supposed, to the circumstance of his having muffed two of his first committee bills as chairman—debacles that profoundly traumatized an already religiously cautious and wary personality. It was his style on the committee and in the House to carefully absorb himself always into the collective identity, notifying petitioners and lobbyists, "Well, it's not *me*, you understand, it's the committee, and I just don't know what they're gonna do on that yet, and I am bound by what the committee decides."

His manner, while receiving these emissaries or conducting hearings, was rather that of a senior vice-president of some small-town savings and loan firm—officious, amiable, correct, but a touch remote, nodding his head and narrowing his eyes to sympathetic squints, all the while ceaselessly tracing successive straight parallel lines with a yellow pencil, then inscribing over them a careful crosshatching, and finally, with equal deliberation, shading in the squares.

Inevitably over the years, with his imposing heft in the nation's economic policies, Mills drew the awed notice of news magazine cover stories and newspaper profiles, but he seemed elusive to any lasting celebration—the attentions of the media were like hammers striking a cymbal of cork. He simply gave off no resonances. Despite his clout in Washington, he left behind him through the years a passage uncannily void of anecdotes or flourish. "I have never," he himself offered, "been one much for comedy." Indeed, his own repertoire as a raconteur was mostly confined to accounts of the doings of his grandchildren. What apparently amounted to his dizziest diversion during those years was secluding himself for an hour or so early every morning to raptly stitch his way through the New York *Times* crossword puzzle.

It wasn't till he entertained the fancy of running for president that "Wilbur first went off the radar screen"

He remained an implacably shy and private creature. Only two years ago, a member of the House marveled, "He lives in such a closed world, nobody ever sees him until he's on the floor. In all the years I've been here, I don't think I've spotted him at more than half a dozen gatherings outside the Hill. He just doesn't make those social and salon circuits up here." On his way to one of the few governmental soirees where he was obligated to appear, he would repeatedly bark to an aide, "Now, I'm not gonna stay for the banquet, let's get that straight." Indeed, whenever a new administration inherited the White House, he would promptly notify them to scrub his name from all social invitation lists. Aside from junkets back home, his solitary venture out of Washington—until recently—was one brief excursion to Baltimore, about 37 miles away. "My only real amusement is work," Mills would maintain. "My father always impressed on me that you can't do a day's work and stay out all night at parties."

So his life beyond the Hill was confined to the snug, orderly privacies of sedate evenings with Polly in the same two-bedroom apartment on Connecticut Avenue they had been inhabiting ever since their arrival in town in 1938—reading and watching television, sitting down to simple suppers of okra, cornbread, fried chicken. "We never eat desserts," he reported. He had once indulged in long walks in the evenings after dinner, "but it's not safe to do that anymore," he grumped. "So now, instead, after we eat I just walk around the apartment a lot." Riding past a slightly dingy little eatery late one afternoon, Mills murmured fondly to Polly, "We ate there once last year, remember, Polly? Walter drove us down here one Saturday for lunch."

PHOTOGRAPH BY KEN KOBRE

Annabella Battistella, aka Fanne Foxe, aka Foxy Fanne.

It was in 1971, when, to the incredulous gaping of all Washington, he actually began entertaining the fancy of running for president, that "Wilbur first went off the radar screen," as one House member now recalls. This unlikely swoon, as it happened, coincided with, and was no doubt not a little abetted by, the White House's fitful but florid blandishments for Nixon's master strategies of revenue-sharing, welfare reform and health insurance, which had to filter through Mills' committee. While privately proposing that "the man is absolutely Oriental," administration aides strenuously cultivated his good humor—a cultivation that was not lost on Mills. At one evening reception for Arkansas bankers, Treasury Secretary John Connally abruptly strode in with Nixon's economic adviser, George Shultz, and Mills—standing off by himself, cupping his glass to his chest—peered at them with a flat unblinking squint behind his glinting spectacles. "Look at that, would you," he finally muttered with a small, vague, dry smile. "Look at that. . . ." A little later he confided, " 'Course, I'm not saying this out of conceit or anything, you understand, but the only reason those fellows showed up is obvious. I mean"—and unable to actually utter it, he merely

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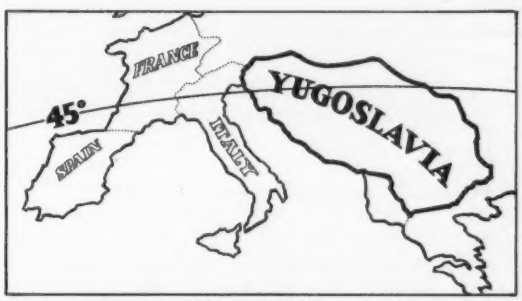

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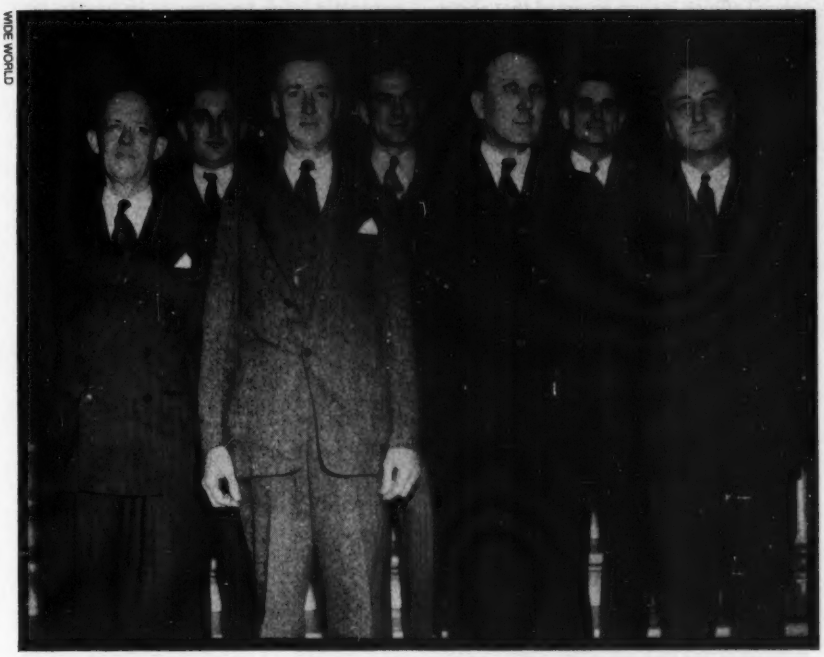


WIDE WORLD

The 1946 Arkansas congressional delegation: Fulbright (back row center) and Mills (back row left).

tapped his coat lapel.

"Mills has always had a problem about recognition," declares one veteran congressional journalist. "Despite appearances, it's been a deep frustration he's had all his life up here." That submerged ravenousness sometimes betrayed itself in small ways: as one of his aides allowed, "Most books he reads by checking for his name in the index." Whenever he met with challenges during committee hearings, Mills would merely flush brightly, a small furious flicker rippling in his right cheek. But he permitted himself no more discharge of passion than that; he kept himself relentlessly compressed, contained. Still, it is a commonplace that such scrupulous officiousness and unassertiveness in men often harbor the most ferocious ambitions, fevers made all the more exorbitant in that they are kept from the tempering effect of ever engaging reality.

"One thing I think happened," surmises a colleague, "is that Wilbur was just getting tired of the House, and there was no other place he could go. He was 62, and he'd reached a point where there were only three things left in the firmament for him: to be speaker, to be vice-president or to be president." It developed, one congressman remembers, "that some of the guys began to talk it up to him first just as a joke. You know, 'You got as good a chance as all the others—why not?' Also, it hardly hurts you as a member of the House to be telling the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee that he ought to run for president. The trick is, we all sit up here shut off from the rest of the country, only talking to each other, and we start actually believing each other." Mills at first insisted, "I've let myself be used a few times, but I've always known what was happening," and even entertained initial suspicions that much of the speculation about his candidacy was being prompted by the White House to embarrass him. In time, though, he began acknowledging with a slight smile, even while signing letters returning donations that had begun to sift in, "It's very gratifying, of course. Hell, they think I'm already off and running down home." Mills went on to recount how, leaving the Oval Office late at night, he would glance at the President drifting off to a far window in the awful solitude of his responsibilities—detailing his aversion to those responsibilities a bit too elaborately and deliciously.

"All of a sudden," says one representative, "we notice Wilbur's started styling his hair. He starts making trips all over the country. By God, he's starting to take it *seriously*. That's the way it happens, I've seen it a hundred times—a guy gets this titillation about running for high office, and first thing you know, he's mortgaging his house, everything he owns. . . ." Mills himself began to report glowingly, "Yeah, members of the House been coming up to me, begging me, 'Now, don't close the door on this thing, there're lots of us ready to go to work for you. Don't close that door.' The House deeply resents the assumption that only senators can be presidential candidates. Deeply resents it. I think they've seized on me, maybe, as an answer to their pride. But the whole art in this thing of presidential politics is a sense of timing—knowing when to move."

But now, against all probability, against his entire career in Washington of grim and unremitting fidelity to the sensible and temperate and realistic, Mills gave himself over to that most towering audacity of all—to run for president of the United States, a leap that could not have seemed more bizarre. "But like I remember somebody over in the Nixon White House saying once," comments a veteran congressman, "power is delicious, and absolute power is absolutely delicious. This town does get to you that way. And Mills, after all, had abstained from wanting that deliciousness longer than anybody else up here."

More than the power, though, what probably claimed Mills finally was that more ravishing siren of these times: the simple celebrity of it all. "It was probably the most spectacular thing that had ever happened to Wilbur Mills," muses one sympathetic colleague. "There's a whole basic difference in kind, in genre, between the kind of attentions he enjoyed as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and going into a ballroom and hearing yourself introduced as a presidential candidate. It does test you. And it was a golden hour there for him for a while. For a brief, fleeting instant, it even looked like it might almost be conceivable—he did have a certain impressive potential constituency, if he could have managed to put it together: the South, Main Street America and especially the business community. I remember once, the president of a corporation flew us down to Florida where Wilbur was to make a speech, a big reception there with people standing in line to shake his hand. Wilbur had just never partaken of those kind of popular theatrics and voltages before; it was a totally new element for him. And God, was he enjoying it tremendously. It was like some kid who had been waiting for half his life, on into middle age, suddenly experiencing his first Christmas. Then, when we got back out to the airport, there was this big shouting argument over who was going to transport Mills back to Washington—seems another corporate president had flown his jet down with the understanding he was to pick him up. So there was this great fracas with both these corporate jets parked out there on the runway, Wilbur watching the fuss off at a distance with this absolutely amazed and wondrous gaze in his eyes. That sort of attention can get to any man. . . ."

Before long, Mills was averring, "A man my age, I'd be 63 years old when I was sworn in—but all my vital bodily organs are actually those of a much younger man. I mean, that's what the doctor told me."

Mills' elemental miscalculation, of course, was that his immense powers and stature within the isolated and insular community of the House could be translated into popular political currency. His eminence and resources there gave him an illusion of some commensurate continental brawn and bulk, when, in fact, as one member points out, "People I'd never heard of I found controlled this institution when I got here. As important as he's been in this special enclosed world here for so long, I could walk down the streets out in my district and not one guy in twenty would have the foggiest idea who Wilbur Mills was. He just never understood that." As he doggedly steamed on anyway, the support of the business establishment, the main engine for his expectations, began to falter and fade out of a peculiar disgruntlement: "They began to say," reports one veteran Hill commentator, "that he wasn't like himself any longer—he was acting too much like a politician." Most conclusively, though, Mills simply irredeemably lacked that final existential political property of a dramatic presence. He carried, in an age of romantic politics, all the electricities and mystery of a retired high-school principal.

Though the bloom swiftly paled from the brief modest bud of his candidacy, he still could not emerge from the giddiness of his adventure. Colleagues remember he continued his flushed and hectic exuberance in the cloakroom, usually a bit potted, possessed still of an improbable clamorous raffish hilarity, essaying witticisms about tax breaks for men keeping mistresses, about marijuana cultists. "I was honest to God astounded by it," admits a seasoned House member. "It was like he had just turned inside out. Up until his presidential gambit, you know, he'd had this reputation for watching Lawrence Welk on television and reading the tax code every night for pleasure. But it's like something simply happened to the man's perception of who he was, his sense of proportion, something deep that never readjusted again."

It was a progressive dissolution, in fact, that assumed an almost classic Sophoclean symmetry. Directly out of his presumption—out of that one short impulsive bite into the apple of hubris—there issued a conglomeration of woes that began beating like bats about his head. After 30 years of an almost priggish propriety in his financial affairs, it soon emerged that about $106,000 of the $700,000 financing his presidential whimsy had been smuggled to him out of corporate funds, with an additional $130,000 donated by milk interests, according to the Senate Watergate Committee. To all closer curiosities about these indelicacies, though, Mills maintained an awkwardly resolute vagueness. More ominously, his grip of authority in the House began, at last, to falter. The Democratic caucus diffused Mills' primacy by insisting he establish subcommittees to tidy his committee's processes—an incursion that, only a year or so before, would have been considered an unthinkable affront. At the same time, he was even visited with a sudden siege of physical travail—a ruptured spinal disc, surgery, then a fractured rib with respiratory complications.

In the end, of course, Mills' story was, in a way, that of the old immemorial Faustian temptation; in Mills' own meager terms, it amounted most surely to a pact with the Devil—with recklessness, with fancy, with pride and risk and indulgence. And it only followed that, once luxuriously surrendering himself to that Faustian giddiness, though shortly denied the power and glory part of it, he would have decided to take at least that other part of it—the lasciviousness—assuming as his Helen of Troy a tawdry-dive stripper, and entering into a world that, by all the simple and prim austerities of his Arkansas Sunday-school conscience, had always constituted his honky-tonk vision of Sin. "Washington is actually so small, there're so many eyes," remarked a Capitol veteran recently, "that everybody usually knows what everybody else is doing by the next morning after they've done it. But when Wilbur decided to enter nightlife, he apparently went in at such a level, it was totally below everybody's field of vision. He really picked out an underground entrance." Indeed, like the rigidly circumspect professor of *The Blue Angel*, Mills was really as much seduced, one suspects, by the sheer smoky darkly-iridescent shimmer of Sin itself as by the particular sylph he chose as its avatar, its angel.

"When Wilbur decided to enter nightlife, he went in at such a level it was totally below everybody's vision"

The Silver Slipper could not have seemed more remote from the mellow, genteel chandeliered chambers of Mills' long domain in the House. A dim, shabby, rank little cranny of carnival bawdiness tucked between a pornographic theater and bookshop, its license had twice been suspended, one 1973 citation stipulating that "its method of operation is such as to harbor and encourage mischievous conduct," its premises "allowed to be used for invitation, enticement and persuasion of persons . . . to engage in prostitution and other immoral and lewd behavior."

It was there in the early summer of 1973, according to most reports, that Mills discovered Annabella Battistella—a ripe, olive-eyed Argentine peeling then under the candy-box label of Fanne Foxe, at 38 just beginning to show a slightly overworn melt and sag, but still gamely saucy. Shortly after Mills first appeared there, Anna ceased performing and began working instead for Mills as a "personal secretary"—as her erstwhile husband later proposed, "They saw she was very bright." Nevertheless, they continued to be a frequent couple at the Silver Slipper, showing up about every week or so for spirited evenings, Mills ordering magnum bottles of champagne adorned with spuming sparklers, the tab usually ranging from $200 to $400—and, on one especially ebullient night, $1,700. As a dancer, Anna found, "He's not so good, but he has a great sense of rhythm." On occasion, Mills would bring Polly along with him, she sitting still and vague and mostly mute amid the rowdy bawling ribaldry, mustering only an intermittent thin festiveness. Several times when Polly was not there, Mills and Anna announced to the other strippers that they often traveled in separate planes to various balmy retreats. Also, he and Anna would often fall into clamorous fusses with each other, Anna once scattering the glasses off their table with a swipe of her arm in a sudden shrill pique over Wilbur's dewy eye-batting at another stripper.

Somehow, though, there seemed a certain reeling, heedless, dangerous and precipitous blatancy to Mills' manner in all this, as if he had pitched himself into a kind of idle kamikaze abandon. He always left his black and silver Lincoln Continental conspicuously positioned right in front of the strip joint, and inside was given to insistently advertising himself around as Wilbur Mills, yes, the Arkansas congressman, yes, the powerful chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, yes, that's right, who had run for president back there a year or so ago. . . .

PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG BRUCE/CAMERA 5

"You've read about her in the newspapers—now here she is!"

Anna herself had grown up in the Cesarian operatic clime of Peron's Buenos Aires, the daughter of a marginally prosperous foot doctor. "Ever since I was a little girl, 4 or 5 years old," she recalled in a pleasant, tinkling voice one morning recently, "I have wanted to be a doctor myself. I am a serious person, actually." As an interim expedient, she began performing as a nightclub chorine—a deviation from her medical career, as it turned out, in which she has been stalled ever since. She wound up marrying a nightclub pianist, Eduardo, on whom her father looked most dourly. "He never thought I would be able to make her secure and happy," Eduardo reports. The two of them then set out on a long, vagrant, haggard odyssey through the nightclubs and strip joints of Panama, Puerto Rico, Miami, Baltimore, arriving at last at the Silver Slipper in Washington, which indeed performed, in time, a Cinderella-style service for Anna.

"I sometimes think I would like to write a book of all that has happened to me," she muses, "like Blaze Starr. She did that, didn't she? This is a nice business, it has its beautiful points, but others not so. I will expose things—oh, my God, if I write what I could write, it would be worse than *Fanny Hill*, it would go on forever. But of course, I could not, there are just some things I could not write about." Asked if that would include, for instance, how she came by those black eyes at the Tidal Basin, she grins: "Oh, you are clever. You are very tricky, I see. Let us just say it was my mascara. My mascara is what I must say for that. . . ."

In her hotel room in Boston several weeks after the Basin episode, she recounted in a soft voice like a rustle and whisper of tissue paper that one of her fascinations "is Theodora, you know, back in ancient times, who as a little girl, only 13, became a prostitute, and was about 14 when the emperor of the Byzantine Empire made her his mistress. Then after his wife died, he married her and she went on to become a great ruler. Her husband was very old, and she took over and ran the whole state very wisely, very greatly. Yes, like Isabel Peron today, in Argentina. She was only a dancer, you know, and yet she met Peron"—

As she was reciting this, Eduardo—divorced from her now for a month, but still sitting in clumsy and extraneous but stubborn attendance on her—abruptly interposed in a loud but oddly thin voice, "Yes, she was introduced to Peron by a pimp, I believe. Yes, he was a pimp."

Anna continued—"anyway, she was a dancer, and that was how she met Peron and became his wife and is now ruling over Argentina. See, it can happen like that, and they are often better leaders than those who have not lived so close to the common life and common people." She paused, and then gave a small, high, fleeting laugh. "But me, the best I do is Wilbur Mills. Ah, well . . . . I have always been like, either I have nothing or am wanting more, am wanting too much. I can never have enough."

It was only about a month after they met that Mills hauled out of the apartment he had inhabited for the past 35 years, and delivered himself and Polly into the Crystal Arms three floors above Anna and Eduardo. It was, at the least, a winsome arrangement. Anna decorated Mills' apartment—"for a simple man," she says, "with early-American furniture and gold carpets." She provided both Eduardo and Mills, upstairs, identical orotund baby grand pianos. For his part, Eduardo now recounts, with a kind of dogged amiableness, that whenever he was in Argentina, Anna would play bridge with the Millses, "with the dummy where I usually sat. Ha-ha. Yes"—emitting now a loud, clangoring laugh with his eyes flat—"I would be the dummy. Ha-ha-ha."

When Eduardo returned from these periodic sojurns—for the last several years, he indicates, he has been engaged in some undefined business vaguely involving "exports and imports"—Mills would greet him effusively. "He would kiss Eduardo," says Anna, "and hug him and say to him, 'Oh, I'm so happy to see you.' " With an equal expansiveness, he would declare to Polly, "You know, Anna is just two years older than our daughter. I think we ought to adopt her, don't you, Polly?"

At the same time, says Anna, "He

didn't want me to associate with anybody in the business except maybe one or two friends. He kept telling me, 'Anna, why don't you get out of that kind of work? You don't want your daughters to grow up and do the same kind of thing, do you?' He is really very strict, an old-fashioned man. Maybe he enjoyed going himself to the Silver Slipper to see girls strip, but he just didn't want for me to do it." Anna reports, "He knows of our problems, between me and Eduardo." In fact, whenever she had a particularly brisk tiff with Eduardo, she would scamper tearfully up to Mills' apartment, and Mills would phone Eduardo downstairs, out of a certain avuncular solicitude whose slight ambiguity evokes "Uncle Ned" in the Sominex commercials, and assure him, "Now, you know I love you both, and I want you to get along. . . ."

But in September, a year after Mills installed himself three floors above, Eduardo finally moved into an efficiency apartment as divorce proceedings began—a divorce that became final two weeks after the incident along the Tidal Basin. As it happened, Eduardo was in Argentina again when that sudden dislocating event occurred, and Mills and Anna phoned him before it flared in the press, Mills advising him, "Now, don't you worry about it, Eduardo, it wasn't like they'll try to make it out in the papers and television. . . ." Nevertheless, the next morning Anna received a call from her brother-in-law: "What's the matter with Eduardo? He came early this morning to the house, so drunk he couldn't talk. What has happened?"

Mills' own explanation, when it was finally produced from his office, had more the effect of a poker-faced lampoon, couched in the filigreed Victorian euphemisms of some account of the staunchly decorous and plucky trials and exploits of Dick Stover: "Our new neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Eduardo Battistella, offered us every assistance during the moving ordeal, and since that time, our families have grown to become close friends . . . . Polly's broken foot prevented our entertaining at home, and she insisted I take our friends to a public place we had frequented before. This I did. . . . After a few refreshments, Mrs. Battistella became ill, and I enlisted the help of others in our group to assist me in seeing her safely home. . . ."

More exactly, according to police, when they stopped Mills' car, several passengers spilled out and promptly proceeded to scuffle among themselves, Anna first simply lying down flat on the ground and a moment later, with a splash, bobbing in the Tidal Basin, the fitful vague grappling of the others continuing after she was pulled out, one officer toppled backward into some shrubbery. Taken to the hospital, Anna explained to attendants that she had sustained her two black eyes in a skirmish with her boyfriend over who would drive the car.

Mills himself remained mute for three days after the incident. From the beginning of his presidential assertion, there were some suspicions that it was all an arabesque ploy to wind up as Kennedy's running mate, and now it was as if, having committed his fortunes to a symbiosis with Kennedy's, some invisible continuing hand had constrained him on to enacting his own rhyming rendition of the disaster that had ended those fortunes, his own lesser, pettier Chappaquiddick. In any case, after the Basin, "he never came back to the House," says a colleague. "We just didn't see him for those ten days until the House mercifully adjourned." And now, like the taunts and mockings of the professor's once-awed students when his infatuation with Lola-Lola was discovered, Mills became the subject of snorts and sniggers from his previously reverent House colleagues, one jingle echoing through the corridors of Congress: "She was only a stripper at the Silver Slipper, but she had her ways and means. . . ."

"Isabel Peron was only a dancer," Fanne said softly, "and yet she met Peron, became his wife, and is now ruling Argentina"

Hastily returning to Arkansas for his suddenly imperiled reelection campaign, Mills encountered some scattered crackles of static. Greeted with hoots and whistles at one high school in his district, he was asked by one student how he'd cut his nose and why his female companion had two black eyes. Mills barked, "Well, young man, you're too young to know," to which the student proposed, "If I'm too young, aren't you getting on up in years?" But on balance, the incident may have had a certain endearing effect: as one gristled constituent put it, "Hell, I didn't know ole Wilbur had it in him."

With his reelection, then, there was a general assumption that he would now return, chastened and sobered, to the comfortable normalcies and discretions of his customary instincts—that, surely, it was over. When it was announced that Anna was opening as the featured attraction at a Boston strip palace, it only seemed that he would probably have to endure now having her forever touring about the country as a burlesque haunting image, a Mardi Gras effigy of his folly.

She was appearing at Boston's Pilgrim Theater—an aged, dank and cavernous hulk with frumpish rococo balconies painted a dingy candy-pink, its dim deeps tinged with a sour staleness, which offered certain symbologies for a pentacostal evangelist's apocalyptic vision of what has happened to America since the simple righteous fortitudes of 1620. Between successive acts—solitary females expeditiously peeling and then executing various copulatory churnings and heavings and leg-gapings—there were nameless movies whose single common plot consisted of repeated breathless phone calls interspersed between a clinical series of fornications and fellatios in livid butcher-counter hues. While one of these was dimly undulating and smacking and groaning on the screen, down a sagging stairwell past leprous plaster walls, Anna was sitting on the edge of a cot in her basement dressing room, where a star had been hastily and wanly crisscrossed on her plywood door with a felt-tip marker, she wearing a faded pink terry-cloth bathrobe and crimson slippers, her bare shins glistening pale and tallowy. With her was Eduardo, her recently scuttled husband, nattily outfitted in a snug sweater and slacks, with a slightly distracted and hectic cheerfulness about him, a flat glare in his eyes. Both of them, in fact, as much as Mills himself, had the faintly manic air of being yet caught in the unrelenting performance of some large mistake not quite comprehended. "I am a little mixed up, excuse me," Anna murmured.

She reported that Mills had already phoned her several times that afternoon. "He does not want me to go on with this, he said. He was worried about all the interviews with television and the newspapers. He would actually prefer, I think, that I go back to Argentina. But this is the biggest chance I have ever had. I was planning to go back to school in February to finally resume my studies to be a doctor, but then this Mills thing came along, and I don't believe this will last too long. But I must work as long as this lasts, that's what I told him."

To all appearances, Eduardo had returned from Buenos Aires to try perhaps reclaiming her one last time. But the next morning, a visitor paused in the corridor of their motel, some immense fracas proceeding muffled behind their door, which,

PHOTOGRAPH BY IRA WYMAN/GAMMA

Mills flew up to Boston to join her burlesque at the Pilgrim Theater.

after a few light raps, Eduardo yanked open, standing in a fog of steam and reek of cologne in nothing but pale peach bikinis, snapping, "We are busy," and then adding as a hasty afterthought a shallow, wan smile before briskly closing the door again. Later, when they were dressed and finishing breakfast, Eduardo—though he had announced the night before he would remain with Anna another week or so—now indicated that he would be leaving the next day. She was without her wig, and her face, with her harshly closely snipped hair, had a bleak frail bony purged look, her skin with a glossy glaze like that of a healed burn. Presently, she took a call from a Los Angeles newspaper—"Well, I 'd rather not right now. . . . Well, okay, if I must. . . . It was just fine last night. . . . Yes, he called several times. . . . No, we are still very good friends. Yes, of course. . . ." Several minutes after hanging up, she became sick, and quickly padded in bare feet into the bathroom. With the dim sounds of her coughing and hacking coming from behind its closed door, Eduardo confessed with a blank, helpless, unhoping smile, "Her father did not want me to marry her, because he said I was not strong enough. Her father was right. I have not been able to give her the strength and confidence she should have had—I have not been able to take care of her like her father knew she needed to be taken care of. He was right to tell her not to marry me. I have failed. But still—I hate to go tomorrow. I hate to leave her alone like this. But it seems I must. She does not want me here."

The show that night was like all the others—*You've read about her in the newspapers—and now, here she is!* and she bloomed forth in a swooping spotlight in a vast voluminous billowing swim of white feathers, glittering, gladly grinning. Soon down to a G-string with a white plume on her rump, she pranced and pumped and shimmied through a strenuous routine that was vintage 1948 Havana Tropicana. Her bald, oddly bulbed breasts tautly buoyant, she then twitteringly distributed, from a frilled Little Bo Peep basket, lollipops to the men along the ramp, all of whom seemed middle-aged—in fact, a rank of elders who, as she leaned down to ruffle their thinning fluffs of hair, all seemed in that murky glow to bear a startling resemblance to Wilbur Mills: a whole gallery of Wilbur Millses. And then, abruptly, she was wearing nothing—no scarf, no G-string, absolutely baskingly bare, her ample lap lushly tufted, she coiling and twining lavishly.

But returning to her dressing room afterward, she immediately began fretting, "He made me do too much, this manager. Usually, I never take off my G-string. He made me show too much. I don't like to go that far, but he said I had to. . . ."

And then, suddenly and incredibly, on that last night, Mills was there himself—actually materializing on the stage with her, braying to the audience, his bifocals glinting in the stage lights, "She's my little Argentine hillbilly, and I've come to see her dance." Uncannily, it was as if he were enacting to the very end those last, sad scenes of *The Blue Angel*—the professor, his position and reputation and all respectability now vanished like a dream, enlisting in Lola's troupe, playing a dumpy clown, reduced to amusing his new fellows by imitating a rooster, cawing and flapping his elbows.

And with that, his colleagues in the House swiftly, with persuasions as delicate and discreet as gamekeepers snaring swallows, managed to softly settle a net over him, delivering him at last into a barricaded and etherized sanctuary at Bethesda—in this operation, acting with the gentleness for a casualty—the least likely among them—of those private furies of hubris and avidity forever tempting, luring them all. ●

The Odd Couple and the old conspiracy theory

By Lionel Rolfe and Jon Newhall

Conspiracy theories are no longer as popular as they were following the Big Three assassinations of the late '60s: JFK, RFK and Martin Luther King. Not even Gov. George Wallace's hint that there might be more to his shooting than a lone maniac nor James Earl Ray's attempt to get a new trial by claiming he was framed have much revived the dark game of conspiracy. Presumably produced to exploit lingering doubts, a string of assassination movies has bombed disastrously at the box office. Over a year ago, *The Second Gun*, a feature documentary on the murder of Robert Kennedy, ran less than a week in New York and never got out of town. Next came *Executive Action*, a sort of fictional documentary about the assassination of JFK; it knocked around listlessly for a while, and then flopped. The most recent assassination movie, *Parallax View*, has done the best of the three. A purely fictional treatment of a two-gun assassination of an RFK-like senator, it is still in release six months after opening. But movie experts credit the leading man, Warren Beatty, more than the film's message, and even at that, it will probably not turn a penny of profit.

Yet conspiracy theories, even if they do not make for box office bonanzas, will not go away, and none has proved as hardy as the notion that Sirhan Sirhan had help in killing Robert F. Kennedy. To be sure, the RFK assassination, at the time, seemed the least open to question. No one had seen Oswald or James Earl Ray actually pull the trigger, but dozens of spectators had watched as Sirhan squeezed off his fatal rounds. Not even Sirhan himself has questioned his role in the assassination. But, from the start, there had been disquieting evidence—not the evidence of the eye or the ear, but hard, metallic evidence: bullets and guns. Ballistics tests seemed to show that two guns, not one, had been fired that afternoon.

That theory—that two guns rather than one had killed RFK—is enjoying a renaissance on the West Coast, thanks to two prominent Los Angeles public officials: Baxter Ward, Los Angeles County Supervisor, and Dr. Thomas Noguchi, L.A. County Coroner. Both men are well suited for the role of gadfly. Ward, a former television anchorman who has a bit of the populist demagogue in him, has most recently been outraging his fellow supervisors by investigating the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Noguchi, who came to fame as the coroner of both the RFK assassination and the Charles Manson murders, is as flamboyant as he is brilliant. He was briefly suspended in 1969 for wishing out loud for more bodies to work on— specifically, he fantasized about the crash of a 747 jet into a Los Angeles skyscraper. Yet the two men have more in common than their talent for publicity: there always seems to be something at the bottom of the things they investigate. Which is why the American Academy of Forensic Scientists will hold a symposium solely on the RFK assassination at its meeting Feb. 19–21 in Chicago.

The second-gun theory of the RFK assassination, long dormant, is having a rebirth, thanks to Baxter Ward and Dr. Thomas Noguchi

In May 1971, Ward says he still believed the Warren Commission version of what happened in Dallas, but one day, as a newscaster for KHJ-TV, he came across a highly respected southern California criminologist, William W. Harper, who apprised Ward of oddities in the RFK case. Harper is a forensic firearms identification expert from Pasadena who for the previous 35 years had been a consulting criminologist with various Los Angeles area police forces, and the county granted him permission to study the ballistics evidence after Sirhan's conviction. After analyzing the bullets, Harper concluded that the official assassination story was false, that at least two guns fired the bullets in the Ambassador Hotel pantry that night. He studied the bullet recovered from Kennedy's neck by Dr. Noguchi; he compared it microscopically to another slug removed from the abdomen of an ABC-TV technician named William Weisel, who was wounded during the assassination. Kennedy and Weisel were struck by bullets from similar but different .22 caliber pistols, he said.

Ward knew he had a good story, so he played it big. In his TV commentary he appealed for a refiring of Sirhan's gun so that new tests could be conducted to clear up the mystery of the two bullets that did not match.

At first the police and the district attorney's office ignored the allegations; but as other conflicts surfaced, they began a crusade to discredit the physical evidence pertaining to the Kennedy case. They suggested that the bullets and gun

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK WHETLI

Rolfe is a free lance who lives in Los Angeles. Newhall is the editor of Zodiac News Service.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK WHETLI

may have been "tampered with" by unknown persons, and convened a Grand Jury which alleged that County Clerk William Sharp had not properly protected the criminal evidence. A panel of Superior Court judges stepped in, reexamined the evidence, and concluded unanimously that the integrity of the bullets and other evidence in the Kennedy case had not been compromised. Still, Ward's crusade to reopen the case disappeared until he was reelected last year to the Board of Supervisors. In a county populated by 7 million people, each of the five publicly elected supervisors wields enormous political power.

Ward had not mentioned Kennedy during his campaign, but a couple of days after taking office, he spoke with the former county clerk, whose career had been ruined by the Grand Jury. Sharp was bitter. He told Ward that he had become a "victim of a political play just to provide an excuse not to refire the Sirhan gun." Ward still didn't bring up the matter. The first few months of his second term were stormy. After he clashed with the sheriff's department, he surprised everyone by declaring himself a candidate for governor of California in last June's Democratic primary election. Ward was trounced by half a dozen other candidates, but for the first time in Ward's political career, the Kennedy case became an issue. During his uninspired effort to capture the governor's office, Ward was asked by people who remembered his television crusades if he would use the office to get to the bottom of the Kennedy murder.

"I thought about it," said Ward, "and decided the logical person to reopen the case would be the attorney general or the governor. The attorney general, however, was Evelle Younger." When serving as Los Angeles district attorney, Younger had been Sirhan's prosecutor.

Rather than wait for election, Ward decided to hold his own hearings. His opponents and the newspapers immediately suggested that he was exploiting the Kennedy tragedy. But Ward went on with his probe.

Noguchi was the final witness before his committee. Noguchi said, in his highly precise but heavily accented English (he was born in Japan), that his profession had been disgraced by Navy doctors' sloppy autopsy of President Kennedy. He said that autopsy haunted him as he prepared to do an examination of equal historic importance on yet another Kennedy. This time, he explained, he saw to it that the autopsy was thorough, precise, open and honest.

The key findings in Noguchi's examination—a fact ignored when first revealed by Noguchi six years earlier—was that Bobby had been struck by bullets from extremely close range. Using life-size charts and scientific language to detail his findings, Noguchi reported that the fatal bullet had been fired at the senator with the muzzle of the pistol only one to three inches away from Kennedy's ear. The other two shots that struck Kennedy hit him directly under the right armpit, and both of these shots, said Noguchi, were perhaps fired with the muzzle actually pressed against Kennedy's body as the trigger was pulled. What's more, said Noguchi, the shots were fired from *behind* the senator.

This version did not mesh with the police version. Virtually every person who witnessed Sirhan's movements in the pantry testified that he jumped off a low table and approached Bobby from the *front*. They all stated that Sirhan had started firing at a perceptible distance away—generally placing the gun three to twelve feet from Kennedy. No one recalled that the muzzle was ever closer than two feet in front of the senator.

Recently, Noguchi gave *New Times* some of the background to his testimony. He claims that it was a year after the Sirhan trial that the implications of his autopsy began to sink in. He had given the whole story of his autopsy to the Grand Jury that indicted Sirhan, but was not allowed to repeat it during the trial. Ironically, it was defense objections that kept him from testifying; its strategy was not to contest Sirhan's role as the lone assassin. What was really on trial, Noguchi said, was Sirhan's state of mind.

The judge imposed a strict gag rule during the trial, and thus few of the witnesses were aware of what the others were saying. The press seemed to notice no discrepancy between what the coroner was saying and what witnesses to the assassination were saying. A deputy district attorney did, however. He approached Noguchi right after he had given his testimony before the Grand Jury and asked him if he wanted an opportunity to change—or correct—his autopsy. The deputy, whom Noguchi says he officially wants to "leave nameless," grasped the significance of the coroner's evidence apparently before the coroner did.

One of the witnesses at Ward's hearing was Dr. Vincent Guinn, a chemistry professor at the University of California at Irvine. Guinn testified that he had been contacted by Noguchi within days of the assassination. Out of thoroughness rather than suspicion, Noguchi arranged for Guinn to conduct a neutron activation analysis on all the bullets in the pantry. Neutron analysis is a relatively expensive and complex testing procedure because it requires a nuclear reactor, and few police departments keep one of those around. Noguchi wanted the test because he knew it was more sophisticated than the conventional spectrographic emission tests usually used to link bullets to a suspect's gun.

Noguchi said that he had made all the arrangements for the tests when DeWayne Wolfer, a Los Angeles Police Department ballistics expert, stopped him. "I respected his opinions at the time," Noguchi says now (one senses regretfully). Wolfer said the tests shouldn't be conducted because they might confuse the issue and the results are subject to interpretation. During the Sirhan trial, the only evidence introduced to show the bullets had come from Sirhan's gun came from Wolfer, who said he had examined them under a microscope. The results of microscopic comparisons are highly judgmental and the spectrogram was, he said, "misplaced."

Wolfer refused, on the advice of counsel, to testify before Ward's committee. Like Noguchi, he has had his share of controversy. The 1971 Grand Jury report, which had put all the blame in the Kennedy case on Sharp, had arisen from a controversy about Wolfer. A Los Angeles attorney, Barbara Blher, filed a protest with the city's Civil Service Commission, protesting Wolfer's proposed promotion to head of the LAPD crime laboratory. She cited his botched ballistic examination in the Kennedy case and that of Jack Kirschke, the former deputy district attorney who came home one day to find his wife in bed with another man. Wolfer got his promotion. A police department investigation said he was a fine fellow after all.

Noguchi wasn't Ward's only witness. In an affidavit, Harper, who was ill, stated flatly that the official police version of a lone assassin wasn't true. Using a microscopic camera, known as a Hycon Balliscan camera, he studied the significant bullet slugs removed at the scene. The Hycon Balliscan camera enables a criminologist to photograph the entire 360 degree surface of a spent slug, magnifying the bullet with its grooves so that the "rifling angles" can be compared with those of other slugs.

Harper said the rifling angles of the bullet removed from Kennedy's neck and those on the slug removed from Weisel did not match. He said the two bullets "could not have been fired from the same gun."

Lowell Bradford, of Campbell, California, the former head of the Santa

Clara County District Attorney's crime laboratory, explained cannelures. Cannelures, he said, are "circumferential grooves" that bullet manufacturers cast in slugs to help guide the bullet from the gun's muzzle. The cannelures are plainly visible to the naked eye. Some have one cannelure, some have two. Bradford pointed out that the fatal Kennedy bullet had one and the Weisel bullet had two.

What this meant, said criminologist Herbert MacDonnel, from Elmira, New York, is that Kennedy and Weisel were apparently struck by bullets of different manufacture.

After Sen. Kennedy's shooting, conspiracy rumors swept the nation. One young Kennedy worker, Sandy Serrano, had been sitting on a fire escape directly outside the pantry area. She told a national television audience that minutes after bullets felled the senator a girl in a "polka dot dress" raced down the fire escape past her, yelling, "We shot him. We shot him. We shot Kennedy." Serrano's account meshed perfectly with the testimony of another Kennedy supporter, Thomas DiPierro, who was standing in the pantry when Kennedy entered the room. He said he saw the girl in the "polka dot dress" just before the shooting started. DiPierro told police that Sirhan and the girl were standing next to each other on a low metal table, and that the young woman appeared to be steadying Sirhan. Moments later, Sirhan was filling the pantry with bullets, Kennedy was down, and the girl in the polka dot dress was gone. Los Angeles police were never able to crack the story of the mysterious polka dot lady. Under intense police pressure, DiPierro reluctantly admitted the polka dot lady might have been Valerie Schulte, a Kennedy worker who was wearing a dress with large green circles, not black polka dots. DiPierro later backed away from his identification of Valerie Schulte, and policemen themselves determined that she had not entered the pantry until after Kennedy.

The most prevalent theory among assassination researchers—a theory that neither Ward nor Noguchi would ever publicly subscribe to—paints Sirhan as a kind of programmed assassin, à la *The Manchurian Candidate.*

Researcher and writer Robert Blair Kaiser, whose book *RFK Must Die* is the standard reference work on the case, was the first person to hint of this possibility. When he was an investigator for Sirhan's defense team, he witnessed a series of bizarre hypnotic sessions between Sirhan and psychiatrist Bernard Diamond. A University of California at Berkeley psychiatrist specializing in criminal behavior, and something of a hypnotist, Diamond quickly discovered how easily Sirhan could be hypnotized. Kaiser sat in on a great many of the sessions. Diamond found he could utter the right words to place Sirhan in a trance, get him to climb a wall like a monkey, and then bring him out with Sirhan remembering nothing. There was also George Plimpton's testimony from the night of the assassination. Plimpton, who had helped wrestle the gun away from Sirhan, said that Sirhan's eyes had a peaceful look as he pulled the trigger. It was as if, he said, Sirhan were in a trance.

Diamond discovered that Sirhan displayed puzzling blocks. Even under hypnosis, he was unable to remember

Dr. Noguchi above, Baxter Ward below.

bringing his gun into the Ambassador. He could not remember the shooting, and where he had been before the assassination remained hazy.

Sirhan bridles at the suggestion that he was hypnotized, and Diamond apparently accepted his explanation that he hypnotized himself. Sirhan was enchanted by self-hypnosis. Yet there seemed to be telltale blocks in his memory. He always balked at the name of a man who went on the lam after the Kennedy murder. He was a man with whom he had explored the occult, but Sirhan always insisted that he had nothing to do with the assassination. When the FBI caught up with the man in a small northern California town, they quickly accepted his explanation that he was trying to run away from his wife.

Sirhan's diary was filled with writing that repeated over and over again: "RFK must die. RFK must die. Robert Kennedy must be assassinated." To police, these mad scribblings indicated the premeditation that drove Sirhan to kill. These same police officials disregarded the words Sirhan repeatedly wrote on the same pages: "pay to the order of . . . pay to the order of Sirhan Sirhan."

Assassination enthusiasts, who are convinced Sirhan was selected and hypnotically programmed to walk into the pantry and begin shooting at Kennedy, are convinced that they know who the second gunman was. In the confusion when Sirhan stumbled forth and began shooting wildly, the real gunman shot Kennedy from behind. (This is the central idea of *Parallax View.*) They point out that an armed security guard had his pistol drawn during the terrifying chaos in the pantry. A newsman named Robert Schulman told police he saw the guard fire a few shots. He thought the guard was firing back at Sirhan (who was never hit), or at Kennedy from behind. What makes this theory even more intriguing is that the guard later admitted he owned a .22 caliber Iver-Johnson pistol, but he sold it to a friend who lived in Arkansas. The new owner of the pistol reports that the gun was "stolen" from his home.

Ward compiled an official transcript of the hearings and presented it to the four other members of the board. He pleaded with his colleagues for permission to turn the county's evidence over to an independent body of investigators. All but one, Kenneth Hahn, voted no. Those who had voted negatively openly admitted that they had been swayed by pressure and pleas lodged by Los Angeles city, county and state agencies—the ones that had conducted the 1968 investigations. The Los Angeles *Times* threw its editorial weight against Ward and Noguchi, calling Ward's hearings a "ghoulish inquiry."

These two—Baxter Ward, the politician, a sort of foreshortened John Kenneth Galbraith, and Noguchi, a quick but amiable little man whose merry eyes seem to reflect knowledge of which he is sole possessor—these two mainly want an objective review of the Kennedy case by a body with no government connections. Ward sees little chance of this, but Noguchi thinks the truth will emerge. Perhaps the forensic scientists' symposium will reveal the truth, and if it shows that two guns did it instead of one, all that will be left is who and why. ●

How Now, Democratic Cow?

By Robert Sam Anson

Kansas City, Missouri, is a cow town, a place where dumb animals are fattened, rounded up and sent to slaughter, leaving generous piles of bullshit behind them. It is also the place where last week the Democratic Party held the first mini-convention in its history. Now, this may be coincidence, or, again, it may not. When 1,300 Democrats come together for three days and go home saying they agree on just about everything, it is hard to gauge the real significance of much of anything, save perhaps one item. In that commodity, the Democrats were at least as generous as the cows.

How else does one regard a gathering where a Texas-born chairman, out of sheer exuberance, kisses a male black delegate on both cheeks? Where Jesse Jackson literally salutes the statesmanship of Richard J. Daley? Where the delegates give the man who led them to the greatest electoral disaster in their history a standing ovation? Where a racist demagogue is accorded the welcome of a visiting potentate? Where a convention dominated by conservatives and regulars passes a charter mandating the inclusion in party affairs of blacks, women, Indians and young people? Where all of this goes on without a riot, a walkout, a single head busted and nary a protester in sight? Party Chairman Robert Strauss, whose artful deviousness kept it all together, regarded it with the look of a man who had just been told his biopsy was negative. "We have brought the national Democratic Party back to political life," he rasped into the speaker's microphone when it was all over. The delegates, many of whom had reason to hate Strauss' guts, roared their approval. Daley, who was reported "apoplectic" over the concessions to women and blacks and yet finally voted for them, was more realistic. "I recognize when power moves," shrugged His Honor, who had reason to be thankful for small favors; this year at least, they didn't throw him out of the hall. Ronnie Eldridge, a leading reform delegate from New York, was perhaps the most realistic of all. "I don't know if any of this means anything," she said of the convention, "but at least we had a good time."

At their mini-convention in Kansas City, the party that can't lose was looking for ways to get slaughtered

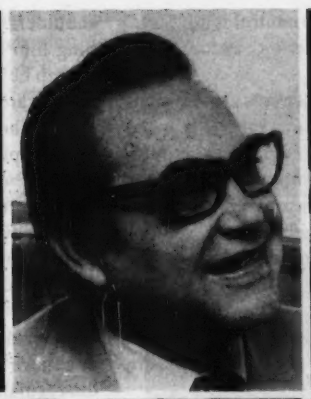
All things being equal, the Democratic National Committee and the delegates probably would rather not have spent $2 million trek-ing out to Kansas City for the meeting, even if speaker after speaker assured them that they were on hand for history in the making. A more accurate description would have been that the delegates were there to correct the history they had made in Miami in 1972, when the party nominated George McGovern and promptly self-destructed. Kansas City was supposed to put the pieces back together, and well in advance of 1976.

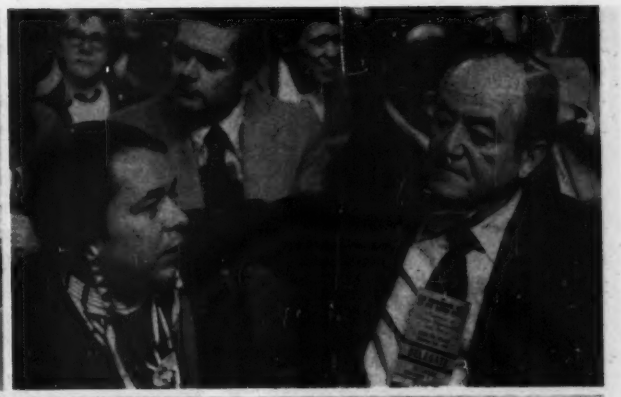
Strauss, a millionaire Texas lawyer and John Connally crony who took over the party chairmanship from Jean Westwood in the wake of the McGovern debacle, was the major architect of the project. A slick, savvy operator, Strauss in two years on the job convinced both reformers and regulars that his heart belonged to them. A reporter in Kansas City asked Strauss if there was *anything* he believed in. Eighteen hours later, Strauss had an answer for him: "God." Yet, for all Strauss' shrewd facility before and during Kansas City, the jerry-built edifice he constructed several times threatened to come down around his ears. That it hung together at all is a mark not so much of Strauss' engineering as the desperateness with which the Democrats want to regain the White House. After losing every state in the nation but one, all elements in the party were anxious to avoid a repeat performance in 1976. The only hitch was finding a solution that would neither fully please nor alienate everyone.

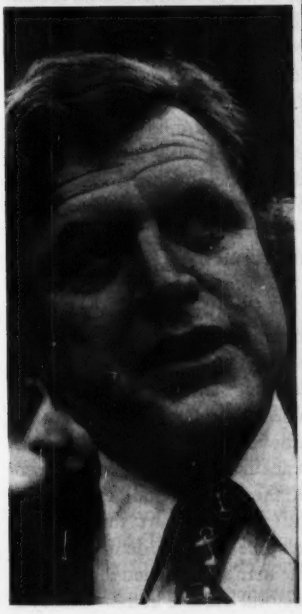
The Democratic governors, meeting in Hilton Head, S.C., in November, came up with what originally seemed the perfect compromise: a clause in the charter eliminating the racial and sexual quotas that are such anathema to the regulars, and their replacement with a so-called affirmative action program to include minorities, young people and women.

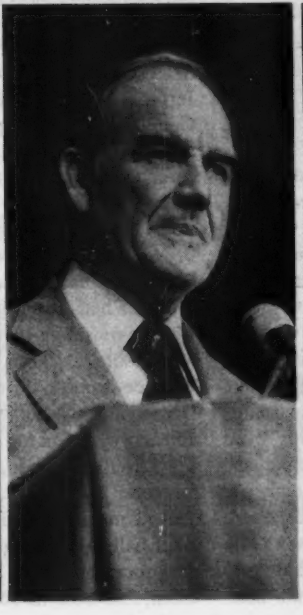
The only hitch, as the liberals soon discovered, was that if a delegation was challenged on whether or not it had made the affirmative action standards, the burden of proof rested with the challengers—a stipulation that, according to new politics

Democratic hopefuls, has-beens and agitators at loose in Kansas City (clockwise from right): George Wallace, Hubert Humphrey, Richard Daley, Lloyd Bentsen with Birch Bayh, Jesse Jackson, George McGovern, Robert Strauss, Ted Kennedy, Bella Abzug and Kenneth Gibson.









lawyers, made it legally impossible to challenge a delegation's credentials. And, sure enough, challenges to six delegations to the Kansas City mini-convention all failed. Dick Daley's Illinoisans, 108 strong, arrived in Kansas City with exactly 12 women. "It's not that the regulars are mean or evil," said a disgusted Herman Badillo, New York's Puerto Rican congressman, "they are just stupid." Congresswoman Bella Abzug was more blunt. "Goddamn bastards," she kept saying. "Goddamn bastards. Goddamn them."

As the delegates began streaming into Kansas City, past the stripper bars with the banners reading "Welcome Democrats," it seemed likely that they were arriving for the kind of mutual throat-slitting that has become the party's trademark. In the lobby of the Muehlebach Hotel, where Boss Prendergast and Harry Truman used to cut their deals and which now served as the convention's command post, delegates milled about like a herd of cattle waiting for lightning to strike and start the stampede. The blacks were talking of walkout. The women wondered where they would walk to. And the young people, fewer, straighter and shorter-haired than in 1972, just wanted someone to tell them what to do. On the other side, the AFL labor bulls, exhausted, demoralized and increasingly cut off from the party's mainstream, didn't much seem to care what happened. The night before the convention started, Al Barkan, Meany's chief political operative who a week before had talked of labor "giving up on the Democratic Party," released his delegates. They could vote however they wished, Barkan told them; in this fight, the AFL-CIO was picking no sides. Or as Barkan's lieutenant, George Hardy of the Service Employees Union, put it with wonderful indelicacy: "You're free, white and 21." When the black union men howled, Hardy quickly added: "That goes for the colored, too."

No one was looking for Armageddon; it was simply how to avoid it. Privately, several black officials conceded they were personally opposed to a walkout but were trapped by the dynamic in the black caucus, a dynamic that required them to be, as one of them put it, "more militant than thou." "I can't see why everyone is getting all worked up over some words on paper," said Newark Mayor Ken Gibson. "I spent three full days working on the platform in 1972, sweating over every sentence, and how many people you think read it? Nobody." "It doesn't mean a damn thing what is written," said Albert Shanker, president of the New York teachers union. "No matter what you write, whoever has the votes at the next convention is going to control it anyway."

But events were in the saddle. Friday night, blacks and women were meeting in hotel suites and circulating petitions to bring amendments that would strengthen affirmative action to the floor. The chances for disruption and walkouts were increasing. There was even a rumor that Barkan was secretly plotting to support the blacks and women on affirmative action, in hopes of creating a charter so radically unacceptable to the majority of delegates that the whole idea—and the party with it—would be sent down the drain.

The man who finally put in the plug was Florida Governor Reubin Askew. It was Askew Saturday who devised a compromise shifting the burden of proof from the challengers yet making affirmative action something less than head counting alone—then quietly lobbied among his gubernatorial colleagues to sell it. Askew had a deal just hours before the balloting was scheduled to start. With the governor's approval, liberal labor—men like Leonard Woodcock of the UAW and Jerry Wurf of the Association of State, County and Municipal Employees—fell into line. The blacks and the women caucused and approved the compromise overwhelmingly, though not without one ironic touch. At the black caucus, Willie Brown first excluded all the press. Then the caucus decided to admit only black press. When the whites objected, one white reporter—a token, one might say—was let into the room. Thus, with a racism Wallace wouldn't dream of did black Democrats approve their party's stand on affirmative action for all minorities.

One can only wonder about a party that seems to fear nothing so much as its own members, a party that is assured of the presidency until the moment it names a man to run for it

With the fix in, the final vote was a foregone conclusion. From a flag-bedecked mezzanine in the corner of the great hall, Al Barkan glowered down on the proceedings and, when the vote was taken, rose from his seat and turned to go, shoulders sagging, his sycophants clapping him on the back and telling the old champ he had fought a good fight. Barkan disappeared through the exit in silence.

The charter the delegates wrought is a purposefully ambiguous document, studded with fulsome phrases of party purpose "to call forth the best the nation can achieve . . . [in] open, honest endeavor . . . in a manner worthy of a society of free people." John Conyers, the former chairman of the Black Congressional Caucus, says it is written "in a way to make us believe that we got what we wanted and the regulars to believe they got what they wanted." It is, in sum, a political document which papers over rather than resolves the contradictions that continue to bedevil the party and its leaders. "There will be fights and bloodletting in 1976, just like there was in 1972, 1968 and 1964," says one northern governor. "The charter won't prevent that. All it does is provide a Marquis of Queensbury rules."

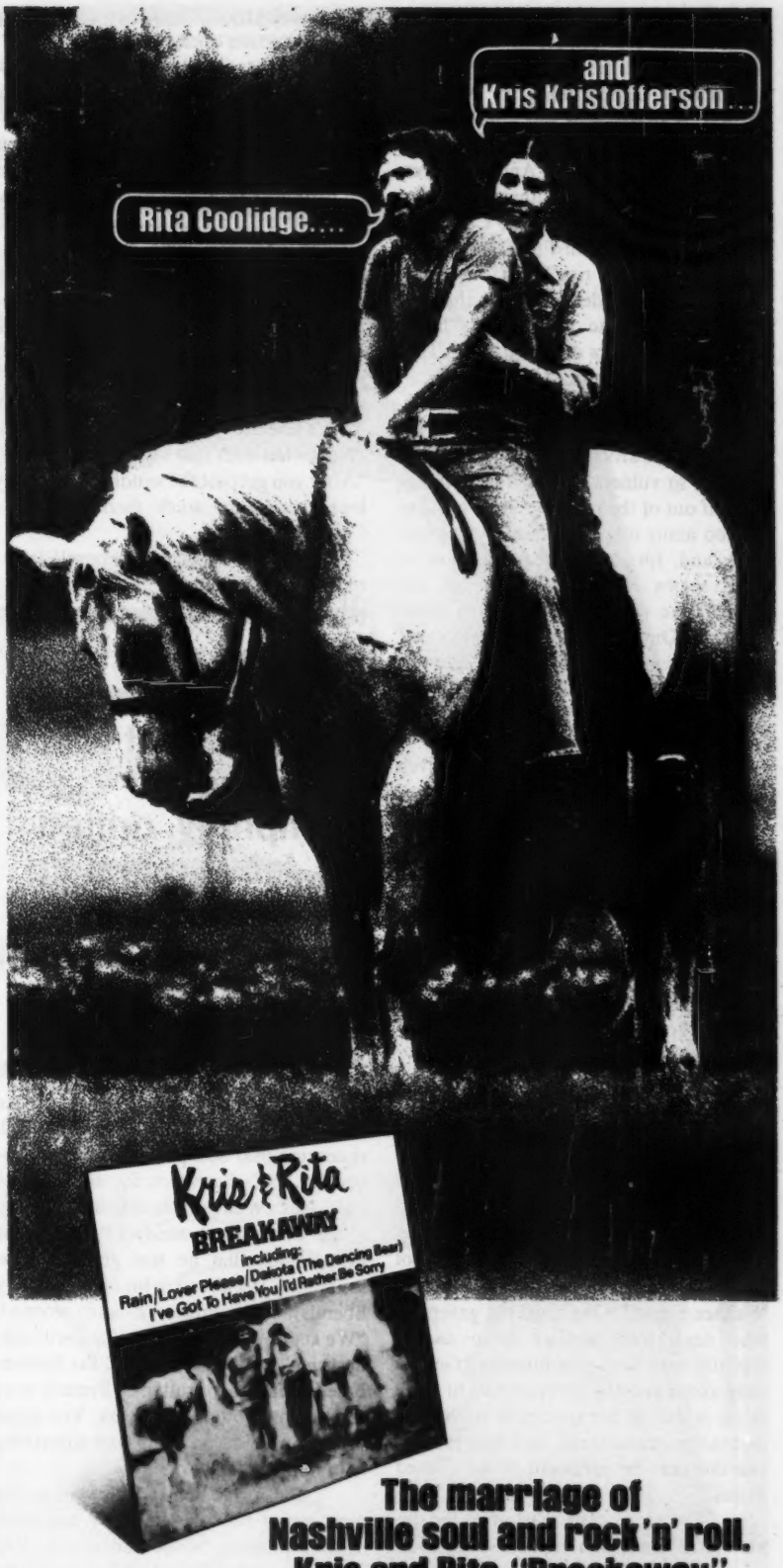
That, in fact, was all that Strauss, who has been walking the shakiest of tightropes the last two years with liberals and blacks pulling on one end, the South and Meany on the other, was hoping for: a demonstration before the national media that more than a thousand Democrats of all stripes and ideological persuasions could at least appear to agree on how to conduct their most basic affairs. "Party unity" is what Strauss called the exercise; he called it that so many times, in fact, that, after a while, liberals who should have known better, like Mondale and Udall, picked up the chant, too, until it seemed that "party unity" would be the Democrats' major campaign promise in 1976.

One of the few intrusions on the air of unreality was the appearance Friday morning of George McGovern, who came armed with a speech designed to stir up the memories Strauss was determinedly trying to forget. Strauss had allowed McGovern to speak only after receiving assurances that McGovern had no intention of running again. The speech itself said that. "We must offer more than an establishment center, where nothing really changes. . . . We will be in the center, and it will be dead center." Then McGovern came to the line whose wording his aides had debated half an hour and, at his insistence, finally let stand. "We must open schoolhouse doors," said McGovern, looking out over the Alabama delegation directly beneath him, "not bow to those who block them." The hall erupted in cheers and applause. At the end of McGovern's speech, the delegates rose and gave the man who had led them to the greatest electoral debacle in their history a

two-minute ovation. McGovern waved out at them, confident and beaming, in command, it seemed, not only of the hall but also of himself. "He doesn't give a shit about the presidency anymore," one of his aides said later. "He can't go through it again, running and not saying what he believes. He's decided he's going to be the George Norris of the Democratic Party."

Hubert Humphrey couldn't let it go quite so easily. As McGovern stood acknowledging his ovation, Humphrey quietly slipped behind the stage, demanding that he, too, be allowed to speak. Strauss either turned Humphrey down or talked him out of it. Thereupon, Hubert, a tight smile creasing his lips, strode over to the press section to deliver an unrequested press conference. A dozen or so reporters hung around him for a while, then, having assured themselves it was the same old Humphrey, slowly drifted off, leaving Humphrey talking to six high school journalists. It didn't seem to bother him a bit. He went on talking for another half hour. Would he run for president *again*, someone asked. "Well," Hubert allowed, "if the party comes to me. . . ." "The only way they are going to keep that old bastard out of it," said one reporter watching the scene, "is drive a stake through his heart."

Humphrey had plenty of company. You couldn't walk 20 yards across the convention floor without bumping into another presidential candidate. In the Indiana delegation, there was Birch Bayh, the Hoosier farm boy talking even more down home than usual. In Texas, the improbably handsome Lloyd Bentsen, who, if nothing else, certainly *looked* like a president should look. ("He's so slick, STP oozes from his every pore," commented Mark Shields, the political operative and former Muskie hand.) In Georgia, Jimmy Carter, prohibited from succeeding himself and so about to resume life as a peanut farmer. ("Jimmy's going to have a tough time out of office," said a Tennessee pol. "He won't even be able to touch the *ceeement* companies.") In West Virginia, Bobby Byrd, another practitioner of "dirty fingernail" politics. In Florida, Reubin Askew, who literally went hoarse telling reporters and delegates he was not going to run. In North Carolina, Terry Sanford, whose two previous candidacies threaten to make him the Harold Stassen of the left. In Washington, Scoop Jackson, who never stopped running after bumbling his way through the 1972 primaries. In Massachusetts, Boston Mayor Kevin White, who had to survive a 1975 election and another dose of busing before he could pick up where Teddy left off. In Ohio, John Glenn (sic). In Arizona, Mo Udall, who is coming dangerously close to believing his image



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as the new Will Rogers. In Maine, Ed Muskie, that comfortably nostalgic figure who could still move old ladies to jam Instamatics in his face. In Alabama, George Wallace, who was holding court for groups of delegates in his penthouse suite at the Holiday Inn. And there were others who didn't even bother to show up. Like Dan Walker and Hugh Carey and Gaylord Nelson, even Fred Harris ("my hatband is in the ring"). At one point, *Time* magazine's delegation to the convention decided to put all the "likely, serious" contenders down on a list. They came up with 16 names.

And that, as much as the artificiality of the ideological unity, is the Democratic Party's trouble. With Ford seeming so vulnerable and Teddy taking himself out of the running, there are simply too many men who want to be president, and, for various reasons, none of them seems electable. Indeed, at this point, none of them even seems *nominateable*. One mark of the Democrats' current dilemma is that the day they arrived in Kansas City, the headline in the newspaper informed them that, according to George Gallup, the leading choice of the party of Jefferson, Jackson, Roosevelt and Kennedy was none other than George Corley Wallace.

Few of the delegates at Kansas City were ready to believe that, come 1976, Wallace would actually emerge as the party's nominee. Party leaders in Florida, Indiana and Wisconsin—states where Wallace has always done well in the past—say that now they are unafraid of him. For one thing, the convention in 1976 will almost certainly produce a brokered nominee and Wallace has never been a compromise candidate for anything. And then there is the opposition of the Kennedy-McGovern liberals, who maintain considerable strength, if not an absolute majority, within the party. Both Kennedy and McGovern have already made it clear that Wallace is not acceptable for either spot on the national ticket. And, finally, there is Wallace himself. One southern governor, who deals with Wallace often and is friendly with him, says bluntly: "George only works at being governor two or three hours a day. If his condition is chronic, and the prognosis static, then how the hell can this man be president of the United States?"

The Democrats must greet the decline of Wallace as a mixed blessing. For while they will be dearly glad to be rid of him, there is not one immediately available, on either the left or right, to take his place. "I've talked to all of these guys in the last few days—Scoop, Udall, Carter, Bentsen," commented a leader in the California delegation, "and they are nothing but a collection of empty suits."

Kansas City demonstrated just how empty some of them were. Among the liberals, Morris Udall was probably hurt the worst, if only because the expectations for him were the highest. Udall imported an elaborate staff organization with him, gathered data on all the delegates, and planted operatives with every state. His only mistake was appearing in person. Udall's off-the-cuff talks to delegations from Missouri, California and New York were counted as disasters. "He told four jokes, and three of them involved death," reported Arnie Weiss, leader of New York's liberal New Democratic Coalition. "Now what does that say about the guy?" "After you get past the windblown, big sky look there's not much there," added a Californian.

Jackson, appointing himself frontrunner, had the delegates come to him—

A dozen reporters, having assured themselves it was the same old Humphrey, drifted off, leaving him to talk to six high school journalists. It didn't seem to bother him a bit

and, in a succession of small groups, more than 500 carefully selected of them did, squeezing into Scoop's trailer in the convention hall's basement for a 15-minute chat. Jackson gave each of them an apple, a cup of coffee, a sandwich and a few broad hints that he was getting to be something of a liberal in his old age. Many liberals were impressed—and worried. "We keep assuming that Jackson will self-destruct," said John Martilla, the Boston-based political consultant. "Bentsen may self-destruct, but not Jackson. You gotta beat him. And you can't beat something with nothing."

But it was Bentsen who put on the most lavish effort, a three-day campaign of flesh-pressing, booze and broads. Friday night, with wife B.A., a tall, bouffant-blond former Powers model doing the "y'all coming" at his side, Bentsen played host to more than 4,000 Democrats, who drank more than 6,000 of his free drinks—the biggest cocktail party Kansas City had seen, the *Star* reported, since Rafael Trujillo was in town 15 years before. While Bentsen was glad-handing, his staff was arm-twisting. Ben Palumbo, Bentsen's frenetic, New Jersey-bred campaign chief ("He ought to have a middle name, something like Ben 'Knuckles' Palumbo," a reporter observed) played the heavy. "The train is pulling out, you better get aboard now, 'cause there won't be any room later," Palumbo would warn delegates, in an admonition that was at once revolting and ludicrous. Once, when a female Bentsen campaign worker made a slip of the tongue in front of a reporter, Palumbo cut in, "Don't print that. You do something for me. I'll do something for you." The reporter printed both comments.

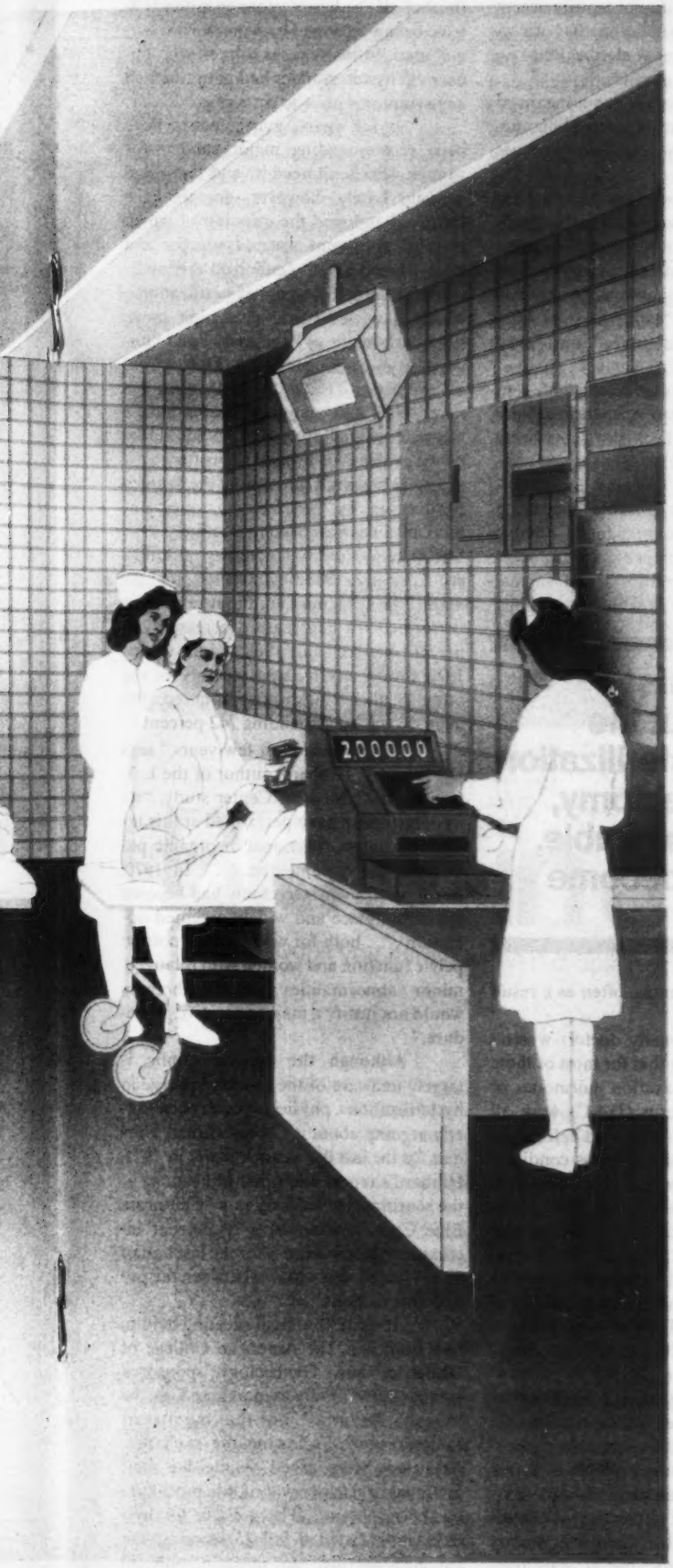
The saving grace for Palumbo is that he has 18 months to learn about presidential politics. The saving grace for the Democrats is that they have 18 months to learn about Bentsen.

In the meantime, one can only wonder about a party that seems to fear nothing so much as its own members, a party that is assured of the presidency until the moment it names a man to run for it. There was something absurd and melancholic about the goings-on in Kansas City. The events had a carefully stage-managed quality to them, as if this were a B movie melodrama rather than politics, and each group had its part to play: the liberals to be the good guys, the craft unions the baddies and the governors, like the seventh cavalry, arriving just in the nick of time. You would have thought you were in the midst of Kiwanians, they were so well-behaved. Strauss wasn't taking any chances. During the "debate" on the economic platform, the speeches had a curiously similar ring, as well they should have, since a DNC staffer had written most of them, both in favor and in opposition.

Being in that convention hall was like being a passenger on a space ship a million light-years from earth, a hermetically sealed chamber where people argued over the placement of commas and mortal enemies called each other "my good friend," while far away, in the real world, people starved and bled or simply went about their business and cared not at all what we in the spaceship out on the Great Plains were doing. Perhaps that is too harsh a judgment. Kansas City was, as promised, a good time, a lot of fun. And there were a lot of Wilbur Mills jokes to laugh about. But the funniest story went this way: Gerald Ford vs. Lloyd Bentsen or Scoop Jackson or Morris Udall or Jimmy Carter or George Wallace or Terry Sanford or Birch Bayh or Hubert Humphrey. Hilarious, huh? ●

Peace for the New Year
from New Times
WIN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY NICHOLAS GAETANO



They wanted to cut you out
but they will not.
They said you were
immeasurably empty
but you are not.
They said you were sick unto dying
but they were wrong.
You are singing like a school girl.
You are not torn.

From *In Celebration of My Uterus* by Anne Sexton

The greening of the womb

By Deborah Larned

A year and a half ago Mrs. J., a 47- year-old Queens' schoolteacher, ran out of birth control pills, and, because her regular gynecologist had retired, she made an appointment with another highly recommended Ob/Gyn in her neighborhood. She was feeling fine, just needed a new pill prescription, pap smear and pelvic. As things turned out, she got all that and more.

"After my examination," Mrs. J. recalls, "the doctor told me to come into his office. I sat down, and in the most

nonchalant manner he told me that I had 'a uterine fibroid the size of a lemon' and needed a hysterectomy as soon as possible. He, of course, was going to do the operation."

The doctor neglected to tell Mrs. J. that fibroids are almost always benign and are so common (1 in every 5 women of childbearing age) that some doctors would go so far as to say that it's normal to get them. "The only thing I heard was the word 'tumor,' " says Mrs. J., "and when I asked, 'Are these things always cancerous?' all the doctor said was, 'Sometimes when we go in we find them to be cancerous.' I was so upset I could hardly talk. My husband was furious about the casual way I had been treated. When he suggested to the doctor that we get another opinion, the doctor just said, 'That's up to you.' "

Mrs. J. never had the hysterectomy. Two subsequent consultations proved that she had only a "tiny" fibroid, which was nothing to worry about. Like most fibroids, it would probably shrink as she approached menopause.

Looking back on it now, Mrs. J. feels lucky. "I'm 47 and very healthy. I feel and look younger than I am. I was happy with the pill and had no interest in sterilization. The last thing I needed was an unnecessary operation." But she worries about the women who might not be so lucky. And she should.

American women are experiencing the effects of a mysterious and highly contagious epidemic. But it's not the disease that's gotten out of hand; it's the treatment. We're having a hysterectomy outbreak and though doctors have been aware of it—even promoting it—for several years, most women still believe that hysterectomies are performed rarely (after all, it is major surgery), and then only to alter the course of some critical disease like uterine cancer.

Hysterectomy, the surgical removal of the uterus, is in fact the fourth most commonly performed operation in the U.S. today—after tonsillectomy, hernia repair and removal of the gall bladder. And though this procedure is still used as a cure for uterine cancer, over the last 30 years hysterectomy has come to be regarded by many gynecologists as a "simple" solution for everything from backaches to contraception. Once considered a surgical last resort, hysterectomy is now put forth as "the only logical approach to female sterilization." American women are being sold an attractive, albeit expensive, all-purpose surgical package—no more periods, cramps, babies or bother—and if they do not readily accept the medical recommendation, they are often bamboozled into sterilization on highly questionable grounds.

Free lance Deborah Larned has written extensively on women's health issues.

While hysterectomy as a means of sterilization is a relatively new phenomenon, the controversy over hysterectomies is an old one.

For nearly a century doctors have been arguing over which "female conditions" warrant the removal of the uterus. In the mid-1800s hysterectomies were performed for such symptoms as general "troublesomeness," "eating like a ploughman," "erotic tendencies" and even "simple cussedness."

By the early part of the 20th century science had replaced superstition, and only so-called medical problems were considered adequate reasons for performing a hysterectomy. To name just a few—uterine cancer, inexplicable menstrual bleeding, small nonmalignant tumors (fibroids), dysmenorrhea (what most women just call "cramps") and vaginal laxness (a condition in which the vaginal walls lose their firmness, often as a result of childbearing).

In hospitals throughout the country, sterilization by hysterectomy, once unthinkable, has now become routine

Even then, many doctors weren't convinced, claiming that for most of these symptoms, rest, relaxation, hormones or scraping of the uterus (D+C) were all treatments that should be tried before major surgery. When a cancerous condition existed, or when a woman had a severely disabling pelvic disease that did not respond to less drastic treatments, no one quibbled over the necessity of a hysterectomy. But would a conscientious surgeon remove a woman's uterus because of simple backache? They've been doing it for years and, needless to say, not everyone is happy about it.

Out of the estimated 2 million unnecessary operations performed in the U.S. each year (a "conservative figure," according to Dr. Sidney Wolfe of Ralph Nader's Health Research Group), hysterectomies are one of the biggest offenders. Several medical studies—one as early as 1946—have shown that at least one-third of all the hysterectomies in the U.S. have been performed on women with *normal* uteri. In many cases women who underwent hysterectomies had not presented any symptoms prior to surgery.

So for years, gynecologists have been recommending major surgery for women who don't need it—and that's bad enough. Lately, however, doctors have simply abandoned the question of which medical symptoms warrant surgery and have wholeheartedly endorsed this operation for the sole purpose of sterilization—which is a clever and disarming move since such labels as "necessary" and "unnecessary" no longer apply. Doctors are off the hook. They've even changed the name. Now a woman may elect to have a "hysterilization." If she has an additional pelvic problem or two, all the better.

In hospitals throughout the country sterilization by hysterectomy, once unthinkable, has now become routine. At the Los Angeles County-University of Southern California Medical Center, for example, the total number of hysterectomies performed for any reason increased 293 percent between July 1968 and the end of 1970. If only elective hysterectomy for the purpose of sterilization is counted, the increase was an astounding 742 percent.

"Up until the last few years," says Dr. Lester T. Hibbard, author of the L.A. County-USC Medical Center study, "no hysterectomies were performed at this institution unless functional or organic pathology was documented. . . . In 1970, sterilization by hysterectomy had become a commonplace and widely accepted operation . . . both for women with normal pelvic function and women with relatively minor abnormalities which otherwise would not justify a major operative procedure."

Although the general public is largely unaware of the sudden upsurge in hysterilizations, physicians have been quietly arguing about it in professional journals for the last five years. Finally in 1971, Hibbard's report and other indications of the soaring hysterectomy rate—California Blue Cross announced a 79 percent increase in hysterectomies for the last half of 1970—forced a showdown between the pro and anti factions.

At its 1971 annual meeting held in San Francisco, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology sponsored what is now fondly remembered as the "Great Debate" on the merits of hysterilization. Following the exchange, physicians were asked to register their approval or disapproval of this procedure by their applause. The acclaim for hysterilization lasted a full 25 seconds; the applause for the "no" position, only 10

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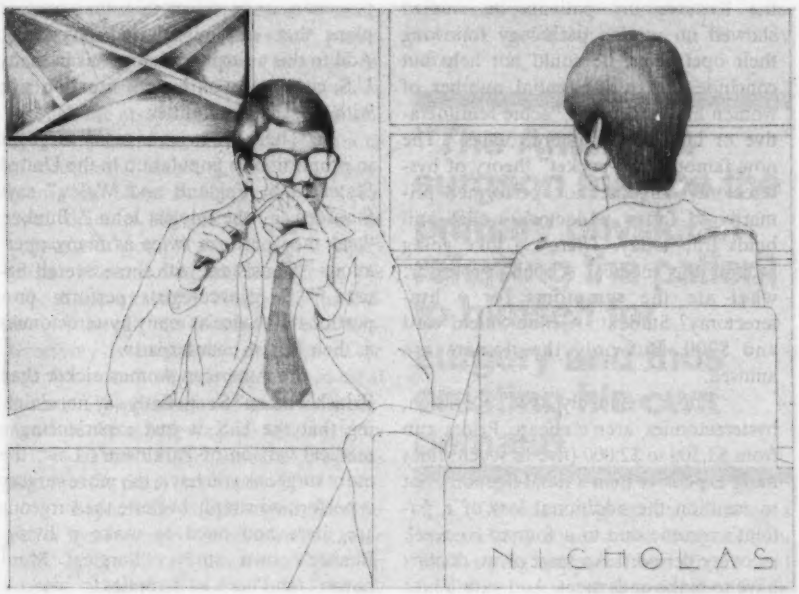
seconds. What's more, according to *Audio Digest*'s decibel meter, the intensity of the advocates' applause was double that of the opposition.

Though this victory may well have been pulled off by a rowdy band of partisans, there's no denying that hysterilization generates extraordinary enthusiasm among many gynecologists. It seems to have a lot going for it.

Contrary to popular belief, a hysterectomy does not bring on menopause, hasten the aging process, or physiologically interfere with sexual enjoyment. The ovaries continue to produce eggs and hormones each month, but because the uterus has been removed, menstruation and any accompanying discomforts are eliminated. As Dr. Joseph H. Pratt Jr. of the Mayo Clinic rather overenthusiastically pointed out at the Great Debate, "No more monthly curse, no napkins, no Tampax, no accidents, no embarrassment, no poring over a calender to see when a trip is feasible."



Other hysterilization promoters point to the fact that hysterectomy is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, whereas tubal ligation (a less complicated procedure involving tying of the Fallopian tubes) has a failure rate of from 2.2 percent to 1 percent. The removal of the uterus also eliminates further pelvic disorders, an important consideration since recent studies have shown that many women who undergo tubal ligation develop an unusually high percentage of pelvic problems in later life. (Whether these disturbances are a direct result of the ligation, however, is unclear. Some experts suggest that women who are no longer able to conceive are simply unwilling to tolerate even minimal discomforts.)

It all adds up to an attractive proposition, and yet for most women the nuisance of menstruation, the chance of contraceptive failure, or the remote possibility of future pelvic problems do not provide enough of an incentive to undergo major surgery. By far the most persuasive medical argument—for many women the real clincher—is that hysterectomy will prevent uterine cancer. As one woman who underwent a hysterectomy recently said, "I went into the hospital to get my tubes tied. When the doctor suggested that I have a hysterectomy instead, the whole idea was horrifying to me. But when he told me that I wouldn't have to worry about cancer of the uterus, I decided that maybe that was the best thing to do after all."

Dr. Ralph C. Wright, a Connecticut gynecologist and perhaps the most outspoken advocate of routine hysterectomy, views the possibility of cancer as fundamental. "When the patient has completed her family," Wright contends, "total hysterectomy should also be performed as a prophylactic procedure. Under these circumstances, the uterus becomes a useless, bleeding, symptom-producing, potentially cancer-bearing organ and therefore should be removed. . . . To sterilize a woman and allow her to keep a useless and potentially lethal organ is incompatible with modern gynecological concepts. Hysterectomy is the only logical approach to surgical sterilization of women."

Even ignoring Wright's apparent view that it is now the gynecologist's prerogative to decide which organs a woman may be "allowed" to retain, it is the "lethal organ" argument that has provoked the most heated debate. This view, says hysterilization detractors, not only appeals to an unreasonable fear of cancer but is patently misleading.

According to Washington, D.C.'s Health Research Group, which recently concluded a study of surgical sterilization practices in federally funded clinics, what hysterilization advocates fail to tell their patients is that the death rate for hysterectomy itself (1,000 out of every 1 million women annually) is, in fact, *higher* than the death rate for uterine/cervical cancer. The American Cancer Society estimates that of the approximately 44,000 cases of uterine or cervical cancer reported each year, 12,000 are fatal (or 100 out of every 1 million women each year). In addition, the Cancer Society claims, a majority of these deaths could be prevented if regular gynecological exams and Pap smears were available to all women.

Hysterectomy will, of course, prevent cancer; if you don't have a uterus you can't get uterine cancer. However, many cancer experts regard this procedure as a risky exercise in "surgical overkill." Dr. Sidney Arje, a gynecologist and vice-president of professional education for the American Cancer Society, points out that there are cheaper and, in the long run, safer ways of preventing death from uterine cancer. A simple Pap smear is 95 percent effective in detecting the earliest signs of cervical cancer, and though the same test is only 60 percent accurate in diagnosing cancer of the uterus, symptoms such as excessive irregular bleeding followed by a diagnostic D+C provide an early enough warning signal for successful treatment. "If the only reason for performing a hysterectomy is sterilization," says Dr. Arje, "you are probably exposing a woman to a danger equal to or greater than the risks of uterine cancer."

Planned Parenthood Federation, along with many others, takes issue with what they call "hacking 'preventatively' at future possibly offending flesh." For most women, the chances of *not* getting cancer far exceed the chances of getting it. "Preventative lobotomies," says Planned Parenthood in an effort to point out the absurdity of the argument, "for young people at statistically high risk of developing violent psychoses or ophthalmectomy for those populations found most likely to get cancer of the eye at some future time have not been suggested by physicians writing in psychiatric or ophthalmologic specialty journals." They might also have pointed out that though cancer of the prostate frequently occurs in men over 50, male urologists are not suggesting routine prophylactic prostectomy.

Medicine is a complicated business and no single explanation can account for the high rate of hysterectomy or for the growing acceptance of hysterilization.

Many gynecologists blame their patients for insisting upon the operation. And yet the evidence does not bear this out. At the L.A. County Hospital, one-third of all the patients who received hysterectomies had originally requested tubal ligations. In another hospital in Florida, where hysterilizations outnumber tubal ligations 2 to 1, tubal ligations are "discouraged by general staff agreement."

Women are not clamoring to have their uteri taken out, but they are demanding more reliable birth control methods. Hysterectomy is sold as a fail safe and if physicians are unable to "persuade" a woman to undergo hysterectomy, more devious methods can be used.

Dr. Bernard Rosenfeld, a California physician who is currently studying sterilization practices in the U.S., describes one doctor's tactic that is especially employed among Third World women.

"I remember treating a young black woman with several children who was having trouble with her IUD. She was interested in trying another type of device and was referred to the family planning clinic of the hospital to have her present IUD removed. About two weeks later I accidentally ran into her at the hospital. She looked upset and I asked her why. She said, 'They just told me I needed a hysterectomy.' I knew from having examined her that she did not *need* a hysterectomy, so I went and looked up her file. On her medical chart the doctor had recorded, 'Patient *requests* hysterectomy.' "

Black women have long been aware of this kind of medical practice. In the old days it was called a "Mississippi appendectomy." You'd go into the hospital to have a baby and come out minus your uterus. Now doctors are more subtle, but the results are the same. When the doctor decides you've had too many children, he tells you that you "need" a hysterectomy and then writes down that you "asked" for it.

So the question remains: why are doctors "electing" hysterectomy for their female patients?

To begin with, 97 percent of all gynecologists in the U.S. are men, and to some extent their attitudes toward their female patients inevitably reflect the current view of women held by society as a whole. A woman medical student, for example, remembers this winner from her Ob/Gyn lecturer: "The only significant difference between a cow and a woman is that a cow has more spigots."

One of the more obvious reasons for unnecessary hysterectomy is that medical students need operating experience. Dr. James Ryan describes an exchange which took place while he was a medical student at Boston University Medical School.

"When the student asked the resident why this woman was having a hysterectomy instead of a tubal ligation, he was told, '. . . We like to do a hysterectomy, it's more of a challenge . . . you know, a well-trained chimpanzee can do a tubal ligation . . . and it's good experience for the junior resident . . . good training.' "

But over-zealous residents account for only a fraction of unnecessary hysterectomies. It's out there in the world of private practice where it's happening and the reasons, many experts say, can be summed up in one word: greed.

Dr. Norman F. Miller, author of the earliest study of unnecessary hysterectomies, first hinted at it in 1946. Referring to the fact that 30.8 percent of all the hysterectomy patients he studied showed no uterine pathology following their operations, he could not help but conclude that a substantial number of women had undergone "acute remunerative or hip-pocket hysterectomies." The now famous "hip-pocket" theory of hysterectomy—an operation performed primarily to fatten a doctor's wallet—still holds true today. There's a joke going around the medical schools—Professor: what are the symptoms for a hysterectomy? Student: A Blue Shield card and $200. But only the doctors are amused.

For a "relatively easy" operation, hysterectomies aren't cheap. Prices run from $1,500 to $2,000 (five to seven times more expensive than a tubal ligation), not to mention the additional loss of a patient's income due to a four to six week recovery period. Like most of us, doctors have to make ends meet. And with a host of borderline justifications to choose among—from the population explosion to the patient's need for dependable contraception—hysterectomies are a tempting solution to inflation.

"It seems inevitable," says Dr. Charles E. Lewis, professor of preventative medicine at UCLA, "that in any occupation where considerable income is available on the basis of events called operations, a small percentage of people can well identify this as a marvelous, income-producing device. . . . Medicine is one of the few fields . . . where, if your wife wants a new coat, all you have to do is a couple more hysterectomies and she can buy it." Or, he might have added, if the doctor wants a Ferrari.

Other critics take a slightly less cynical view. "Human beings," says John R. Knowles, former director of Massachusetts General Hospital, "rationalize what they do without any conscious effort to be dishonest or greedy. Doctors are human. A significant number of them—20 to 30 percent—are de facto fleecing the public while 'knowing they are doing good.' "

Conscious or unconscious, most experts agree that what makes the hysterectomy business so lucrative and what may influence the high rate of needless surgery is the hospital-oriented, fee-for-service system of payment that dominates U.S. medical care. Comparative studies of fee-for-service medical practices (financed largely by insurance plans such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Medicaid) and prepaid medical plans (such as California's Kaiser Permanente or Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York) suggest that the incentive of fee-for-service medicine not only fosters more hospital admissions in general but as much as 50 percent more hysterectomies than prepaid plans that employ salaried physicians. Add to this a surplus of surgeons in many U.S. cities and you have a situation ripe with surgical possibilities.

"There are twice as many surgeons in proportion to population in the United States as in England and Wales," says Stanford anesthesiologist John P. Bunker, "and they perform twice as many operations." Consistent with these overall figures, U.S. gynecologists perform proportionately twice as many hysterectomies as their British counterparts.

Are American women sicker than British women? Some flatly say no, claiming that the U.S. is just experiencing a medical version of Parkinson's Law: the more surgeons you have, the more surgery is performed simply because the surgeons are there and need to make a living. Bunker's own study, "Surgical Manpower" (and here, as it applies to gynecologists, the choice of the word *man*power seems particularly appropriate) attributes discrepancies in the rate of surgery not to differences in U.S. and British health needs but to differences in the organization of health care.

One of the crucial factors—important to the hysterectomy controversy—can be found in the consultant system.

"The British surgeon is a true consultant," Bunker notes. "He sees patients only as they are referred to him by a general practitioner or internist, and he is hospital based. The American surgeon by contrast . . . may be the primary physician/general practitioner referring the patient to himself for surgery and thus creating his own demand."

What women tend to forget (and it's not surprising since in the majority of cases a woman isn't sick when she sees her Ob/Gyn) is that gynecologists are trained

surgeons. Perhaps more than any other single group of medical consumers, women rely upon gynecological specialists, not as consultants but as their primary physicians. More than likely, if gynecologists had no vested interest in recommending surgery, fewer unnecessary hysterectomies would be performed.

But at present, with the childbirth business drying up, we have a lot of supertrained gynecologists running around with nothing to do. From the point of view of a physician who may benefit from "self-referral," hysterectomy may be the ideal form of birth control. For a woman to see a gynecologist under these circumstances, says Dr. Ed Stim, medical director of a New York women's clinic, "It's like sending a fly into a spider's web."

The case for hysterectomy has not been made. Despite the claims of gynecologists that surgical advances have made hysterectomy a "relatively easy" procedure—it may now be done through an incision in the vaginal wall as well as through the abdomen—it remains a major operation and, thus, all the complications of anesthesia, bleeding, infection, pneumonia and blood clots may occur. Moreover, there is always the possibility of serious local complications, such as injury to the intestine, vagina, bladder or the tube that connects the bladder to the kidney. Although the death rate for hysterectomy is commonly accepted to be equal to or only slightly higher than tubal ligation (18 percent), the total complication rate for simple vaginal hysterectomy is 10 to 20 times higher than the complication rate for tubal ligation.

Beyond the cancer argument in favor of hysterectomy—in most cases a scare tactic—is the more fundamental question of how "useless" the uterus really is. Many American physicians would agree with hysterilization advocate Dr. Ralph Wright: the uterus functions primarily as an "incubator" and when conception is either no longer possible or no longer desirable, it loses its function. And yet such unsolicited remarks as "You're 42 and don't need your uterus anyway," or "When you're finished with your family come in for your birthday hysterectomy," are regarded as cavalier and presumptuous by many women.

But even granting that at some point in a woman's life her uterus becomes something akin to excess baggage, the medical profession largely ignores the emotional impact that a hysterectomy may have on a woman's life.

Psychiatrists agree that a hysterectomy is often a blow to a woman's identity, yet doctors continue to discount the evidence—chalking it all up to female neurosis or sentimentality. "Gynecologists persist in believing," says Sylvia Oliver, a psychotherapist in Seattle, "that most women feel relieved by no longer having to suffer the nuisance of menstruation, and that with adequate counseling a 'well-adjusted' woman will be able to realistically cope with her hysterectomy. On both counts gynecologists are often wrong."

Dr. Peter Barglow, a psychiatrist on staff at the Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago, finds "that hysterectomy is clearly and immediately visualized as an irreversible, drastic procedure, which removes an organ with high value in the ego's image of the body, as well as with considerable conscious value in the woman's sense of identity and femininity. Surely, the loss of an organ whose presence was reaffirmed monthly cannot easily be denied." By contrast, Barglow and his associates suggest, "tubal ligation . . . involves a less drastic change to the body image . . . ."

"The American surgeon may be the primary physician referring the patient to himself for surgery and thus creating his own demand"

Of course, depression following a hysterectomy is not a universal reaction. With strong support from friends and family and with a clear understanding of the possible physiological and psychological effects of the operation, most women can handle the loss of their uterus. Many women who have had hysterectomies for severe medical problems *and* who do not plan to have any more children have an easier time of adjustment. "The uterus," says one woman who recently underwent a hysterectomy for chronic pelvic infection, "is not a sacred organ. After what I went through, worrying about my femininity is the furthest thing from my mind. I'm just so relieved to feel like a *person* again."

The story is a little different, however, for women who have been rushed into elective hysterectomy with little preparation. A 36-year-old mother of three says her operation was first suggested by her gynecologist. "My doctor somehow convinced me that a hysterectomy would solve the contraception problem and that I wouldn't have to be bothered with my heavy periods. I am embarrassed now at how reluctant I was to ask questions. I still find it hard to believe that I went along with it. Afterwards I became depressed. Even though I didn't want to have any more children, I realized that I wanted to have the option.

"I finally went and saw a counselor. In one sense, the whole thing was good because I could no longer think of myself as only a 'mother.' I had a chance to figure out who else I was. But I still feel upset and angry. All my life I was valued, sometimes overvalued, as a mother. Then I had my uterus removed and everyone, especially my doctor, expected me to go along like nothing happened. It seems like you just can't win."

The best way to "win" is for a woman to learn as much as possible about the reasons for her hysterectomy and the alternative forms of treatment. If there are medical indications for surgery, a second opinion is advisable.

If a woman is considering hysterectomy as a means of sterilization, or, as is often the case, it looks like her physician is electing it for her, she should ask her doctor to explain not only the risks of the procedure but also the alternative forms of contraception, including tubal ligation.

"It is the prerogative of the patient," states a recent precedent-setting California Supreme Court decision, "*not* the physician, to determine for himself the direction in which he believes his interests lie." A physician may not remain silent about risks or alternatives to proposed surgery, the court states, "simply because divulgence might prompt the patient to forgo the therapy that the physician feels the patient really needs. This attitude assumes instability or perversity for even the normal patient."

So, at least in California and now more recently in the District of Columbia, informed consent is a patient's right (not her privilege), and she may sue a doctor not only for physical damages but for failure to state the alternatives to proposed treatment. And it's about time.

With a hard sell, half-truths and a leave-it-to-me-dear, thousands of women have been buffaloed into major surgery, and hysterectomy has become one of the fastest growing and most questionable elective medical procedures in the U.S. The gynecological profession, led by such devotees as Dr. Wright, has a real head-start and women have a lot of catching up to do. But with the California Supreme Court ruling in one hand and even a copy of *In Celebration of My Uterus* in the other, at least women can give the doctors a run for their money. ●

side trips

Leif Brush and the Earth Philharmonic

Iowa City, Iowa—Someday Leif Brush will write a symphony, but now he is busy tuning a tree, perfecting the Insect Broadcasting System, and inventing other instruments to perform the symphony. The rough idea for his river harp is on paper: now he needs engineers to put his idea into blueprint form and roughly $500,000 to construct the instrument. His rain and draft monitors are perfected. These are all examples of what Brush calls terrain instruments, instruments played by the elements of nature. The music they make are the random, minute sounds of nature—water running down a tree, ants' footsteps, a leaf hitting a taut wire—electronically amplified and then recorded.

Unlike his fellow professors at the University of Iowa's School of Art, who paint, sculpt or make prints in their indoor studios, Brush's studio is his yard and house. When the wind is strong, he monitors three steel stakes in the ground around a tree and several steel pins driven into the trunk, crotch, bark and limbs of the tree. By hooking one of the stakes or pins to a pre-amp, he can record the vibrations caused by the wind buffeting the tree. Each is recorded separately, but his goal is to be able to hear them simultaneously. Soon, he'll be able to mix the recordings to bring out the most interesting sound taking place at any given moment.

Five wires of different gauges strung between two trees serve as his cricket and cicada monitor. Insect noises cause the wires to vibrate slightly, but when these vibrations are amplified electronically they can be recorded. While recording this monitor, he heard strange noises he couldn't account for until he noticed that ants were crawling across the wires of the monitor. This led to the portable Insect Broadcasting System, consisting of an amplifier, transmitter and insect recording studio (a small plastic box with a tinsel-thin metal floor wired to pick up the sounds of ants walking).

Brush has perfected some other devices for recording the sounds nature makes but rarely lets us hear. His draft monitor is constructed of individually tunable wires and fits into a window. Besides letting flies in, it allows Brush to record sounds made by gusts blowing into his house. His rain monitor is a 300-foot length of 12-gauge wire. The amplified vibrations caused by raindrops hitting the wire sound like the random striking of piano keys.

"When you pluck a guitar the sound decays, dies out, after only a few seconds, but the decay time of the rain monitor lasted sometimes for more than a minute without any electronic restatement. This makes the acoustics of a concert hall sound like a peanut shell. Man-made acoustics are too limited and contained for me scale-wise," says Brush.

Brush's goals go beyond perfecting each individual instrument and then composing music the way a producer arranges various tracks in order to make a record. He wants to explore new art forms by showing how art and technology can work together.

"Lots of what we know trickles off from the branches of science while exploration in art has sort of ground to a halt. The uneasiness I feel with compartmentalizing science into one area and art into another is that it only siphons off the energy that should flow between the two."

The $3,000 grant Brush received last year from the National Endowment for the Arts enabled him to show how science and technology can mesh. His river harp, "an interdisciplinary, generative public-use sculpture," sprang from the work he did under the grant. He

proposed to the university a musical instrument that would span the Iowa River. Brush's rough design called for 75 wires to be strung between beams anchored on both sides of the Iowa River. Three performance barges joined as one would float underneath the wires, and their parabolic shape would focus and reflect the sounds made by musicians, actors or dancers on the barge toward the wires. Sensors on the barge floor would make it possible to hear as well as see people dance. The river harp, however, was an idea whose time has not yet come. While several engineering professors volunteered to work out the technical problems, the art and music instructors vetoed the project as too weird.

What is Brush doing? Sometimes even he doesn't know. "I'm not going to put a label on my work before I know what the hell it is. Some people say I'm putting down certain artistic forms. Really, I'm just temporarily unplugging from them."

—By Dave Helland

Tooth Town, U.S.A.

Florence, S.C.—It was 3:30 a.m. and Ulyses Chapman, a 46-year-old high school teacher from Pasadena, California, rested in his green Cadillac outside the Sexton Dental Clinic. For the past four nights, Chapman and his wife had slept in their car as they traveled across the United States to Florence to buy new dentures.

They arrived at the clinic at 3:00 a.m.—along with that day's first 225 patients—and by 5:30 p.m. they would both have new dentures and be ready for the four-day trip back to California. "In Pasadena, a set of upper and lower dentures would have cost us $600 each," Chapman said, glancing at his wife waking up in the back seat. "They cost us $40 a set here. The trip out here cost us $137 so far, so double that and add $80 for the dentures, and you see why it's worth it to come this far."

For 24 hours a day, five and a half days each week, the Sexton Dental Clinic—founded 49 years ago in this quiet South Carolina town of 26,000—turns out dentures daily by the hundreds in an assembly line, while-u-wait fashion. Clinic officials say that for the past 20 years their high volume has permitted them to keep their price for a set of "uppers and lowers" at $40 (always cash).

For many of the patients—300 to 450 each day—who drive hundreds and even thousands of miles to the clinic, Florence is the only city in South Carolina they know anything about. Most of them call it "Tooth Town."

The license plates of the campers, pickup trucks, Cadillacs, Volkswagens and motorcycles crowded into the parking lots—from California, Michigan, Ohio, Delaware, New York, Florida and North Carolina—are witness to the clinic's widespread reputation for inexpensive, prompt and satisfactory service. Clinic officials say they do no advertising, in keeping with professional ethics. Instead, the clinic relies on the recommendations of satisfied customers to spread the word.

At 3:30 each morning, the clinic's staff of 120—including six dentists—begins making the hundreds of impressions from which the dentures are molded. The 125 seats in the crowded air-conditioned waiting room are constantly filled as patients wait their turns. The rest of the crowd sweats in the parking lot, listening for their numbers, as if waiting for their order of fried chicken to be ready.

The clinic itself is unimposing. The main office is a small one-story brick building. Behind it are two small green wooden buildings and several parking lots. In one of the buildings, dentures are checked for flaws. The other—the extraction building—is the final stop for all first-time denture patients to be fitted with "immediate dentures." There, two dentists pull teeth from the Novocain-numbed patients. Average extraction time is 15 minutes. The patients are immediately fitted with new dentures before their gums have a chance to swell, and then they can head for home.

"They've got a guy in there with an arm this big around," said a grinning Florida man, making a circle with his fingers six inches across. "He pulls teeth like he's pulling nails out of a board."

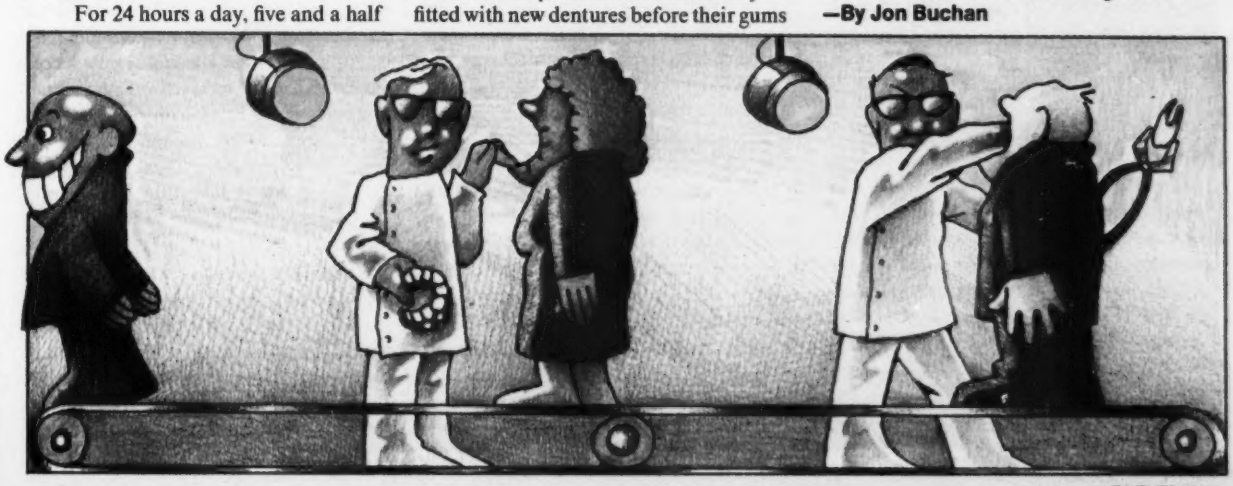
The energy behind the clinic comes from 75-year-old Dr. Claude Lee Sexton, who helped found the clinic in 1925. According to his friends, the thin, white-haired North Carolina native has done well financially with the clinic. Besides the clinic, he also reportedly owns two local motels which he keeps filled with out-of-town patients. Sexton is "worth millions and millions of dollars," though he maintains a simple lifestyle, says a lawyer who knows him well.

Despite the widespread reputation of his clinic, Sexton abhors publicity about himself and his clinic. He refuses to be interviewed or photographed because he fears other dentists will interpret such attention as attempts to advertise. One local dentist says many of his colleagues consider Sexton the "Benedict Arnold of the dental profession" because his high volume, low cost operation hurts many beginning dentists who say they can't afford to work so cheaply.

Such controversy is not new. For 20 years there have been indirect attacks on the clinic in the South Carolina General Assembly in the form of proposed legislation setting standards that would make such an operation illegal. But dissatisfied customers are hard to find at the clinic. Many of those in the early morning crowd are back for repeat trips.

Mrs. M.D. Reed of Staunton, Virginia, was back at the clinic last summer for her fourth visit. She is one of the clinic's biggest boosters and misses no opportunity to tell her friends about it. "They don't do any advertising, you know," she said with a long, white, perfect smile. "It's all word of mouth—ha, ha—and that's the best kind of advertising there is."

—By Jon Buchan



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BILL NELSON

The Eddie Haskell Show

A piece in two acts, starring Ken Osmond and Johnny "the Wadd" Holmes as Eddie

By Sam Merrill and Brandon Tartikoff

After sticking pins in an Eddie Haskell voodoo doll, Beaver learns that Eddie is sick and has been absent from school. Beaver is conscience-stricken and brings flowers to his supposed victim. Eddie assures Beaver that he isn't really sick, but only playing hooky from school.

Eddie

Hey, Squirt. Why would you want to go and stick pins in a voodoo doll of me?

Beaver

'Cause I don't like you, Eddie. Nobody does. Not even Wally, and he's your best friend.

Leave It To Beaver, "Voodoo Magic"

In the first shows of the series, Eddie was just the kid in the neighborhood nobody liked. But as the series progressed, we kept manufacturing the character until he was an unctuously sickening kid who didn't have one straight bone in his body. The kid who played Eddie Haskell wasn't a good actor, but he was a good character. He seemed to be like Eddie, with the same personality. But, under the surface, he couldn't have been as much of a creep.

Norman Tokar, former director on the *Leave It To Beaver* show

Leave It To Beaver wasn't your typical situation comedy of the late '50s-early '60s. The difference was the kids: the Beaver, his older brother Wally, Clarence "Lumpy" Rutherford, Larry Mondello. *All* of them thought and spoke pretty much like real children, a radical innovation among 1950s' sitcoms.

On the other family shows, there was always the scene in which the parents tried to "understand" their kids, condescendingly intellectualizing the mysteries of the adolescent mind. But the magic of *Leave It To Beaver* was the way it examined life from a child's point of view. Each episode contained at least one scene in which the Beaver and Wally, in the privacy of their shared bedroom, tried to analyze their *parents'* behavior.

It wasn't easy.

Nobody knew what the boys' father, Ward Cleaver, did for a living. He wore a tie, took clients to lunch, played golf on Saturday, and doled out the same solid, middle-American advice Robert Young was dispensing on *Father Knows Best* while his wife, June, a Pat Nixon look-alike from the cloth coat days, puttered around the house, deferring all problems more important than what was for dinner until Ward came home from his mystical office. And often, those problems had to do with some bit of mischief Eddie Haskell, Wally's best friend, had gotten the boys into.

Eddie Haskell was the first—and until Ted Baxter of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, the only—continuing character on television to combine outrageously two-faced opportunism with thorough (and thoroughly unwarranted) egotism. But Eddie was sharper, more cunning, more . . . *dangerous* than the benign Baxter. He was a sphinx of cherub and reptile; curly blond hair, blue eyes, with a smile that was all tacky innocence and a patronizing, steel-wool-on-a-blackboard way of addressing adults. Eddie's classic line was, "Hello, Mrs. Cleaver. Hello, Mr. Cleaver. And how is young Theodore?" (Beaver's detested first name.) Meetings with Eddie always left Ward shaking his head, mumbling, "I don't know, June. There's something *about* that boy. . . ."

Eddie Haskell was popular in his day, but today, 10 years after the show retired to rerun city, the character has become a bona fide cult figure.

The June 19 issue of *People* magazine reported on two college students who've made over $100,000 in the last nine months selling mail order T-shirts bearing such well-known faces as Nixon, Bogart,—Hitler and Solzhenitsyn. But their hottest number, some 40 percent of total sales, has been—Yes!—Eddie Haskell. Their success has capitalized on years of cultish speculation about what had become of America's favorite brat. What he had become was this: the pop symbol of rebellion to a generation that didn't want to grow up to be Ward Cleaver.

"News" of Eddie Haskell's true identity and whereabouts has been rifling through the national rumor underground since the mid-'60s. First, Eddie was supposed to have become Art Garfunkel. Then Alice Cooper. But *now* everyone *knows* who Eddie Haskell grew up to be. (Even the way you hear this latest rumor is different; that all-important transposition

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Sam Merrill's last piece for NEW TIMES *was on Hugh Hefner. Brandon Tartikoff works for ABC in Chicago.*

COLOR PHOTOGRAPH OF EDDIE HASKELL BY DAVID STRICK

COLOR PHOTOGRAPH OF EDDIE HASKELL BY DAVID STRICK

There's been a change in Charger. It's a whole new car.

For years, Dodge Charger has made a name for itself as a great personal car.

Now, for 1975, Charger is a totally new car—the first luxury Charger, a car that is now both very personal and very elegant.

We've named it the Charger Special Edition, and we've restyled it, front to back.

We've given it a classic grille. A sculptured rear deck. Deep, stately side windows, backed up by optional louvered opera windows.

And inside, this Charger has a lot of personal touches. Like crushed velour upholstery. Carpeting right up the walls. It even has a digital clock.

The all-new, Charger Special Edition 1975 from Dodge. You'll love the change we made.

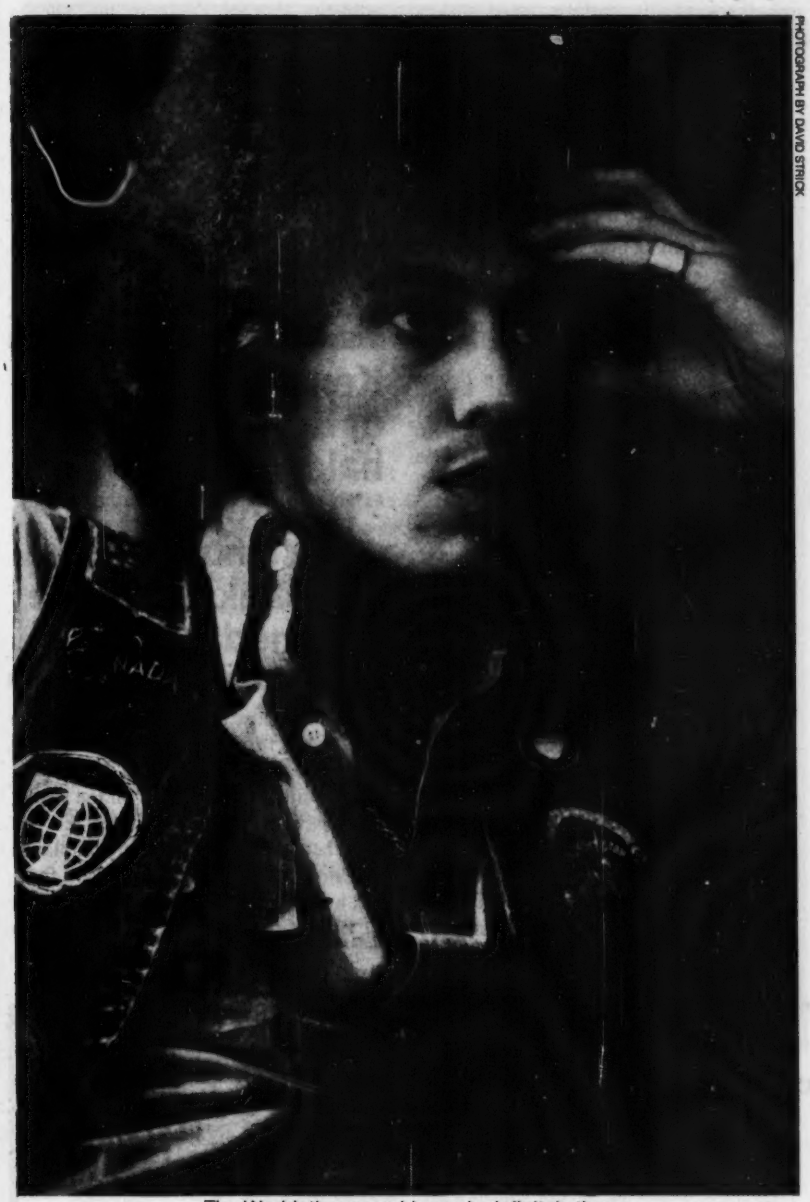
Introducing Dodge Charger Special Edition '75

Extra care in engineering makes a difference in Dodge. Depend on it.

CHRYSLER MOTORS CORPORATION

Dodge

Dodge Trucks



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID STRICK

The Wadd: the resemblance is definitely there.

Leave It To Beaver Quiz

1. Someone from *Leave It To Beaver* married Raquel Welch. Who was he and what part did he play? (It wasn't Lumpy.)
2. What part did Tony Dow (Wally) play in a recent TV commercial?
3. What was special about Jerry Mathers' (Beaver's) stand-in?
4. Bob Mosher and Joe Connelly, the creators and original writers of the *Leave It To Beaver* series, were also writers on what previous radio and TV series?
5. How did the theme song from *Leave It To Beaver* go?
6. What regular on *Leave It To Beaver*

concurrently played a regular role on another series?
7. What current box-office giant played Tom Henderson, a friend of Wally's who—in the eyes of Ward and June—got married too young?

from Rona Barrett subjunctive to Lyndon Johnson imperative.) The guy who played Eddie Haskell has become Johnny "the Wadd" Holmes, porno superstar (with the 13-incher) of the '70s.

Jingle-jangle, jingle-jangle, jingle-jangle. . . .

Rule of thumb: anyone with a 13-inch cock can show up an hour late for an interview and still make a grand entrance. Johnny the Wadd arrives in a custom-patched denim ensemble, covered with bells.

The nose seems a bit flatter now, the frame broader. And, of course, those curly locks are longer, freakier than when we last saw them in 1964. Yet, this man *does* bear a startling resemblance to the famous brat. Yes, Johnny "the Wadd" Holmes just might be the real Eddie Haskell.

The Wadd takes over the room. He stakes out a chair by the window, stretches his legs, lights up a cigarette. Johnny the Wadd achieves instant relaxation in the little motel room filled with strangers (one of them a photographer clicking steadily while he speaks). He attributes his inner peace to the stars. ("I'm a triple Leo.") But one supposes that in his line of work, the ability to relax in motel rooms is a must. After all, this is the man who has starred in 2,200 porn films! When the director wanted eight come shots in one day, Johnny delivered the wad (with enough left over to trick that night). Compared to his usual work load, how tough could a free-for-all interview be?

Listen:

"I want you to put my address and phone number in the article. I live at fifty-four sixty-six Santa Monica Boulevard, Hollywood, California, nine oh oh two nine. My number is area two one three, four six four, five one six one. And I want twelve copies of the magazine when it comes out. . . . I produce, act, direct, do script rewrites, stunts, makeup, camera work, sets for television and ghostwrite magazine articles using a phony middle name. . . . I tried to sit down one time and figure out how many chicks I've done. Start off with an average of a chick and a half per film, that puts me over three thousand right there. Then I try to hit at least two orgies a week. And, of course, I do tricks. A lot of swing couples. Movie producers and their wives. I figure I'm up around six or seven thousand. . . . I have several nightclub acts. Modern dance, modern jazz, nude Othello, Picasso, Egyptian, surrealism, everything! . . .

"The Japanese government invited me to a pornography symposium. They had me set up in a booth in this glass-

domed auditorium right next to an 18-foot-high poster of myself with a hard-on. They were agape at my cock. . . . I don't do drugs and I don't drink alcohol, except maybe once or twice a year I'll have a glass of wine at a Jewish wedding. I like Jewish people. They're gentle. . . . Ozzie Nelson is a transvestite. He really digs gettin' into garter belts and eyeliner. . . . I'm straight, but I *like* gay people. They're gentle. Like Jews. . . ."

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAMERA 5 / BORSARI

Patrolman Osmond does his bit for the Ward Cleavers of the world.

"There's a rumor going around that you're the same guy who played Eddie Haskell on the *Leave It To Beaver* TV series."

"We won't get into that. *At all*! You're going to let that question ride."

"Is there any truth to it?"

"I don't know. . . ." The rapping of the cigarette pack on the table seems out of character, breaks up the easy rhythms of his earlier conversation. "What's the next question?"

So Johnny the Wadd won't answer, but a confidential source within the Screen Actors Guild will. He says Eddie Haskell did *not* become Johnny "the Wadd" Holmes. They say Eddie became something infinitely stranger, incredibly more shocking: they say Eddie is an L.A. cop.

He looks a little thinner than he did 10 years ago, the face more gaunt, but there's no mistaking it; Patrolman Ken Osmond, badge number 5847, is the real Eddie Haskell.

Osmond was 21 when the *Beaver* series folded. At first, there were a few parts: some TV spots and a character bit in a Doris Day movie. Then nothing. He invested a chunk of the Eddie Haskell money in a charter helicopter business, but his only aircraft crashed in Pacoima, California, in 1967. The following fall, Osmond entered the Los Angeles Police Academy. He graduated to the North Hollywood force.

The Osmonds live off a main drag in a working-class community. Ken keeps several guns around the house, which is also protected by an elaborate, security-alarm system he installed a few years ago because "I know what's out there." A cluster of police diplomas decorate the bedroom wall and a crucifix dominates the hallway.

Ken's wife, Sandra, who teaches Sunday school (Ken calls her "an avid Christian"), keeps five photo albums under the coffee table, but there isn't a single publicity shot of Eddie in his halcyon days. "They're all over at my mom's house," Ken says. "She still thinks I'm going to make it big someday."

There is only one clipping: the Sunland Women's Club Juniors honoring him as policeman of the month. The brief article makes no mention of his former life.

So Ken Osmond isn't into show business anymore. But he *has* heard the rumors.

Ken has no photos of Eddie in his halcyon days. "They're at my mom's house. She still thinks I'll make it someday"

"The first time I heard about Mr. Holmes was from Internal Affairs. They're the policeman's policeman," Osmond says, putting a stack of LPs on the stereo. Roy Clark is up first. "I had a few sessions with them after they received complaints that a cop on the North Hollywood force was making 'dirty movies.' They showed me clips from some porno flicks. I have to admit, there *is* a physical resemblance there. The guy is apparently pretty well-

The Beaver Box

A Mini Interview with Jerry Mathers (the Beaver)

Contrary to popular belief and the obituaries that appeared in the New York *Times* and other major newspapers, Jerry Mathers (the Beaver) is alive and well and looking for a job in southern California. Rumors of his death got started in 1967, soon after he enlisted in the Air Force.

Q: Why do you think rumors that you were killed in action in Vietnam got started?

A: I was in the Air Force at the height of the war and I guess people figured anybody in the Air Force had to die.

Q: Were you, in fact, ever stationed in Vietnam?

A: No, I never left the country. The war was growing unpopular at that time. The Pentagon had a policy of keeping people with a "name" out of action. I even tried to join the Marines, but the top brass told me I'd never get farther than Washington, D.C., because if somebody well-known *did* get killed, it'd be bad publicity.

Q: What did you do when you saw your own obituary?

A: Nothing. I figured it would be silly writing to all the papers that carried it just to say I was alive. Everybody who *knew* me knew that.

Q: Were there any repercussions?

A: Yeah, the Pentagon called my mother to find out where I was stationed. She told them that's what they should be telling her!

Q: What about Shelly Winters crying over your death on *The Tonight Show*?

A: That's funny, I heard it was Totie Fields on *The Merv Griffin Show*.

Q: What are you up to now?

A: I just graduated from Berkeley in philosophy, and I'm getting married soon, and I'm sort of . . . looking for work.

Q: Have you been in touch with Ken Osmond?

A: No, but I'm inviting him to my wedding.

Alice Cooper Makes an Interesting Suggestion

The guy on the phone put two individually familiar elements, *that* voice and *those* words, together to form a strangely disorienting whole.

"Hello, Mrs. Cleaver. Hello, Mr. Cleaver. And how is young Theodore?"

"Who is . . .? Ken?"

"No, this is Alice. I heard a rumor that you were doing the Eddie Haskell story."

"And we heard a rumor that you were Eddie Haskell."

"I heard that rumor, too."

"How do you think it got started?"

"I remember the *day* it started. I did an interview and this guy asked me what kind of kid I was, so I said I was obnoxious, disgusting, a real Eddie Haskell. *A* real Eddie Haskell. But the story said I was *the* real Eddie Haskell. It was the biggest rumor that ever came out about me. Wherever I went, I had to keep saying, 'No, I am not Eddie Haskell,' until finally I got a T-shirt that said, 'No, I am not Eddie Haskell.' But people still believed it. I guess it's a desire of Eddie Haskell fans for him to have grown up to become Alice Cooper. Have you spoken to Kenny Osmond?"

"Yeah. He's a cop now, and he's not mischievous anymore."

"That's a drag."

"As a kid, were you a *Leave It To Beaver* fan?"

"Yeah, but Eddie was the reason I watched it. I mean I liked Lumpy and had a crush on Miss Landers. But I was Beaver's age myself and I looked up to Eddie. Eddie was the ultimate rat. He was terrific!"

"Incidentally, Jerry Mathers is alive."

"But what about all the newspapers that said, 'Beaver Shot in Vietnam'? . . . Hey! I've got an idea. Why doesn't Kenny Osmond get a band together?"

"I don't think he's the type. . . ."

"Wouldn't it be terrific? It's such a commercial idea. You should mention it to him. He could come out in his short hair and police uniform and be his old, obnoxious self. People would come from miles around to see the Eddie Haskell Band."

"I really don't think. . . ."

"He'd be a star again. Then *he* could have a T-shirt that said, 'No, I am not Alice Cooper.' He'd make a lot of money."

endowed, and that's the source of a lot of ribbing I get on the force." Osmond flashes that conspiratorial smile he used to share with us every time a Haskell scheme resulted in the inevitable broken window or dent in one of Ward's seemingly endless string of glistening new Plymouths (perhaps Ward was a Plymouth dealer). But the grin fades quickly. The cop is back. "I'm a police officer. My moral life has to be above reproach."

Maybe a discussion of rock music would lure Eddie out of this preposterous disguise. "Have you heard the Alice Cooper rumor?"

"Sure. But when I heard *that* one, I didn't even know who Alice Cooper was. I still don't know if *it* is male or female. I took a look at an album in a store. I wasn't flattered."

"I guess you're not a rock music freak."

"No, I'm a country and western fan. But mostly just on records. I don't go to the Palomino Club or anything."

"Why not?"

"Well, they get all the top c&w acts but . . . it's still a bar. I mean, I was there once, and to tell you the truth, I felt like I needed a backup unit."

Ken's police trip is coming on a little strong. Maybe *too* strong. Maybe the old Eddie has been putting us on. There's one sure way to find out if a young officer is a cop or a Cop: drugs. "Have you done any narcotics work?"

"Sure." That grin again. "Narcotics is my favorite duty. The drug situation is more critical than most civilians realize."

"Is there really any difference between working with drugs and, say, burglary?"

"When you're talking about burglary, you *are* talking about drugs."

There's no doubt about it now. Ken Osmond is definitely a Cop.

"When you were a kid, did other kids expect you to act like Eddie Haskell?"

"A group of them used to give me a bad time. I had to fight my way home from school a lot, and I usually lost. Now, every once in a while, I get to lock one of them up." Ken smiles and again, for one flickering moment, almost becomes Eddie.

Momentary silence. Then the record changer click-drop-whirs. Roy Clark gives way to Bonnie Owens and Merle Haggard. Ken disappears into the bedroom. "I've got something I think you fellows will really be interested in," he teases. Shades of double-crossing Wally. Drawers open and close, papers rustle. Ken is back before you can say, "Hello, Mrs. Cleaver," with the smile that used to accompany those words. This *must* be him—the real Eddie Haskell at last. We brace for anything: Could it be a pitch for shares in a uranium mine? A hot typewriter? A taco franchise in Chinatown? "Here!" Osmond offers for inspection two strangely oversized, crudely printed tickets.

"What . . .?"

"Passes to the Fifth Annual L.A. Police/Celebrity Golf Memorial. Two fifty each. It's for charity. All the big stars will be there. You know, Dean Martin."

So Ken Osmond is a Cop.

And the only question remaining is, why didn't Johnny the Wadd simply come out and say, "No, I am not Eddie Haskell"? Perhaps he realized that in doing so, he would have killed off more than a rumor. He would have smothered a myth that a lot of people desperately want to believe.

Those of us who started out as normal, healthy American kids and ended up being branded aberrant by society *need* an Eddie Haskell, someone whose very existence is an insult to Ward Cleavers everywhere. And the bizarre sexual mischief of Johnny "the Wadd" Holmes serves that purpose as well today as Eddie Haskell's comparatively tame pranks did a decade ago.

Yes, somebody *has* to be Eddie, and it might as well be Johnny the Wadd. We can no longer depend on Ken Osmond. He grew up to be Ward Cleaver. ●

Answers to Quiz

1. Patrick Curtis. He didn't play a regular part, but he was Tony Dow's stand-in and did extra work. They're divorced now. Nothing lasts forever.
2. A hillbilly, for Old Milwaukee Beer.
3. The Beaver's stand-in was a midget lady. That way, the studio didn't have to hire a tutor for another child actor.
4. *Amos and Andy*, for 10 years.
5. Da Dot, Da Da-Da Da Dot-Da Dah. Dot Da-Da-Da, Dot Da Da. Da Dot, Da Da-Da-Da Dot, Da Da. Da Dot Da Da Da-Da Da Dahhh ("The March of the Tin Soldiers").
6. While Richard Deacon was playing Fred Rutherford, Lumpy's father on *Leave It To Beaver*, he was also playing Mel, Alan Brady's brother-in-law, on the old *Dick Van Dyke Show*.
7. Ryan O'Neal.

Billy knows best

Billy Gray's Bud Anderson may have been the consummate television innocent in *Father Knows Best*, but he's grown up now

By Greg Wustefeld

Twenty autumns ago, growing up average in America became immeasurably facilitated when *Father Knows Best* premiered on grey-lit magic boxes in living rooms everywhere. Davy Crockett coonskin caps and explorer myths would be put to rest in the clutter beneath beds (drifting accessibly back up into dreams), with school, work and sport settling in for a permanent stretch of uncompromising reality. Fettered by an older sister who proclaimed him utterly barbarian, utterly infantile, utterly utterly, by a younger one who was a perceptive, benign little pest, and by parents who always just *knew*, Bud Anderson was to evolve as a truer legend, a vicarious pal down the street, a responsive fellow traveler.

No pretty singing star like Ozzie & Harriet's Ricky, nor inarticulate stiff like jock Wally Cleaver, he was exuberant, inquisitive, misunderstood, imaginative, beleaguered, mischievous, pragmatic, affable, hostile, bungling, resilient, moody, astute, open, witty, sincere, victimized, eager, trusting, tenacious, naive, heroic, a potential outsider. He was real.

I learn that Billy Gray resides in sleepy Topanga Canyon, north of L.A. A dated photograph shows him with near waist-length hair. Drugs are sometimes mentioned in the "Whatever-became-of . . ." rumors trailing him. The credits for a few unconventional recent film ventures have included his name. Given the lapse of current history, the information is intriguing. It appears that in no way is he out of the picture, or out of contention. A phone call to the West Coast prompts his unhesitating, and unelaborated, invitation to "come see me race."

Ventura Speedway, up Highway 1 from Topanga, is a ⅛-mile oval dirt track bracketed by tall arc lights and grandstands alive with bodies and color in noisy commotion. Overhead megaphone speakers cut loose with the announcer's eager chatter.

I locate Billy in the confines of the pit area. He wears black and gold leathers and is sheathed from knee to ankle in self-devised protective tubing. The physical impression is of Clint Eastwood and Jack Nicholson compacted after blending. His hair is chopped short. His manner is slightly preoccupied, tense. He is not here for kicks or idle diversion.

The motorcycles in speedway racing are unique. Czech-made, weighing under 200 pounds, they look like rebuilt heavy duty bicycles and plow around the tiny track in spectacular broadsides, kicking up a propulsive rain of dirt clods and reaching speeds of up to 50 mph. They are not equipped with brakes.

Between his appointed heats Billy cups an oxygen inhaler over nose and mouth to relieve interim shortness of breath. He's achieving slow starts tonight and races only moderately well, failing to advance to the finals—unusual for him—but eliciting considerable applause nevertheless. He sits off in a corner adjacent to pit, track and grandstand and silently, intently, studies the best racers' remaining performances. A minor throng approaches him once the night's competition is concluded.

"How old are you?" a youngster asks. When told 36, he stares inscrutably, certain he sees Bud Anderson.

"We watch you all the time," others say, or, "You're weird."

"He's an old fart now," comes the perfunctory dismissal of a contemporary with a paunch and a wife.

Billy autographs a denim purse. A blond lovely flutters, enthralled. The young men hang back, reticent, with alert eyes. One will venture an inquiry about fuel or parts.

The crowd dissipates. Before departing, Billy and an assistant gather equipment and wheel his bike to an orange van. Suddenly from the vacated pit's periphery intrudes the loud and unfulfilled taunting of a frenetic little girl with a crazed, solitary gaze. "Bil-ly Gray is lonely," she wails, singing the line again and again, smile twisted in reckless abandon, legs jumping and flinging and finally dispatching her, depleted with delight, alone.

COLOR PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID STRICK

COLOR PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID STRICK

The house, a vine-entangled retreat, banks securely into the canyon's slope, upper floor level with the serpentine road behind. Billy is in his garage, a small room opening onto the roadside gravel. He's shirtless and in old jeans. The smile is Bud Anderson's—easy, not flagrant, with that tremor of anxiety or vulnerability to the lip. He is relaxed, soft-spoken and working on his backup bike for the evening's event at Ventura. He knows what the talk will eventually get around to.

"What I feel strongly about in relation to *Father Knows Best*," Billy says right off, "is the responsibility for purporting to be a reasonable facsimile of life." The words are chosen carefully, patiently. "And the bad thing, that I feel not too good about, is that the model is so deceitful. It usually revolves around not telling the truth, either out of embarrassment, or not wanting to hurt someone, or. . . . Looked at from a certain slant, it's an incredibly destructive pattern for emulation."

Billy is acutely sensitive about the series and his participation in it. Many of the 203 episodes shine pure as the golden rule, faultless in values and morals; but petty fraudulences do tarnish others.

"It *was* a cut above most TV fare," Billy says "but a dangerous cut. Jim [Robert Young] teaching Margaret [Jane Wyatt, his wife] how to drive, for example—an authentic, identifiable situation and source of real argument in many households, I'd imagine. When she fails to do everything just right, he becomes short-tempered and starts fuming—normal stuff. Then they get into almost a scream-out in the living room where we kids are all standing watching open-mouthed. They notice us and go through this little facade, or rather, wait. . . . Betty, my older sister, takes them off the hook, that's it. Evidently we'd never seen our parents argue before—our parents don't argue—which is pretty interesting. But Betty applauded and said. 'Oh, isn't that nice. You're making believe you're arguing, to show us what it would be like if we didn't have such wonderful parents who got along so well.' And they agreed. Later, Margaret and Betty drive off and I'm standing with Jim and I say, 'Gee, you know I saw you guys arguing and it. . . . Are you *sure* you weren't arguing?' I really put it to him, and he said, 'Nope.' Just looked me in the eye AND FUCKIN' LIED RIGHT AT ME. Now you might not think that's so awful, but a more helpful thing to say would have been, 'Everybody argues at times. It's not the end of the world. We don't enjoy it, but sometimes our frustrations outweigh our restraint and common sense and we get carried away. It'll happen to you, too. We don't encourage it. We're not proud of it. But it happens.' That's a real approach to living.

"Of course, few people agree with me," Billy adds. "Most say, 'Gee, I thought the show was *ter*-rific, just terrific.' They like the character of Bud, true, but also the idealized situation, where nothing ugly or traumatic ever happens and the worries are silly ones. It relieved some people, and stirred resentment in others. A lot is subliminal. People got fucked over because they weren't as even, as Pollyanna-ish. Kids have told me how their parents compared them negatively to me. Whether it's intended or admitted or not, the show *is* a model, not just an entertainment. There were people who actually thought I owned that car, who'd stop me on the street and ask how my sister Kathy was.

"All along I protested. Never able to change a word, though. The writers knew best. I tried to make the character as human as possible in my approaches and responses to things, sure. As the series progressed and more assignments revolved around Bud, the scripts began to draw from my own interests a bit. But the acrobatics, all the physical humor and burlesque, the vamping and camping, director Peter Tewksbury and I worked out ourselves."

The Billy/Bud line of distinction soon grew fainter, in part because, as Billy explains, "the role became such a hassle to perform. I didn't like the character of Bud as written, thought it was bullshit at the time. And I got bored, really tired of doing the same part all those years. I'd been acting steadily in films since age six before getting saddled with the series. I was working long hours and not being paid commensurately. Nobody adjusted my contract after the show's initial success. I felt exploited."

For another reason, too. In 1955, only one year into Bud Anderson and the limiting stereotype that ensued, Billy was cast as Plato opposite James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*. "Yeah, I'd been interviewed, tested, wardrobed—everything was set. A hiatus in production freed me from the series briefly. But filming was postponed, I was due back at *Father Knows Best*, Young and his producer-owner partner wouldn't release or shoot around me, and I lost the part."

Billy is silent for a while. He slips another part into place on the cycle and makes some adjustments. "All in all, I'm kinda down on the whole thing of *Father Knows Best*," he says quietly.

If any debilitating residue of acrimony or remorse tinctures the pronouncement, it is all but undetectable.

A new day. Billy is alive before 7:00 with the light of the sun, mornings after racing being no exception. Five or six hours of sleep suffice. He eats only raw foods—mostly fruits and vegetables—and emerges from the kitchen sipping from a cool silvered mug of orange juice spiked with papaya, dates, banana and bee pollen. Clad only in jeans, he's fit as any steak-primed featherweight.

The house is still. Billy lives alone now. He subsists on rent from the lower quarters of this comfortable old home and cash picked up in speedway. The TV remittances dried up long ago.

Father Knows Best ceased production in 1960. After six demanding years of tedium, Billy intended to serve his early 20s an extended holiday. Content to let things ride, he would live the good life. Acting offers—"more of the same, more Bud Anderson"—were summarily declined, and he left his newly acquired Topanga property for Hawaii, to deep-sea and spear fish, ski and surf, sailing the long voyage home. A languid, idyllic life—before the bust in '62.

"I spent 45 days in jail for a handful of seeds and stems in a clean marijuana lid. A Mexican would have done two years; but the right high-powered defense could also have beaten the rap entirely on illegal search and seizure. I was and wasn't lucky. Bobby Driscoll's demise landed on me, too. He was a kid actor (Disney's Uncle Remus tales, *Treasure Island, The Window*) and good friend who got busted for hard drugs. With no legitimate justification the court put me on the Naline program—five injections a month to detect any morphine base in the system. That was fallout from Bobby. Kid actor/heroine addict, was the connection. People read drugs then, it spelled dope fiend, evil, assassin of youth. I gained a reputation in the business and got little work. It hurt monetarily, and being discriminated against unjustifiably, but otherwise I couldn't care less what anybody thought."

Billy reclines on the bed. No wounds seem to have lingered, nor impenetrable carapace accrued, from the experience. We are watching the morning news, Billy adjusting the volume with an outstretched toe to accommodate the recording of our conversation. The early maturing of a child professional raised in "total freedom" may have had him dragging cycles and smoking grass at 15, and even-

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Greg Wustefeld is a free-lance writer based nowhere in particular.

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NY 11/3

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So why is the "poison-dart" frog poised on our hypodermic needle? Because a scientist from The American Museum of Natural History is collecting these frogs to study their biology and evolution and to determine the variety of poisons present. These poisons are chemically unique and are giving medical scientists clues to the mechanism of nerve transmission. This information is relevant not only in human neurology but also in other important areas of medical research.

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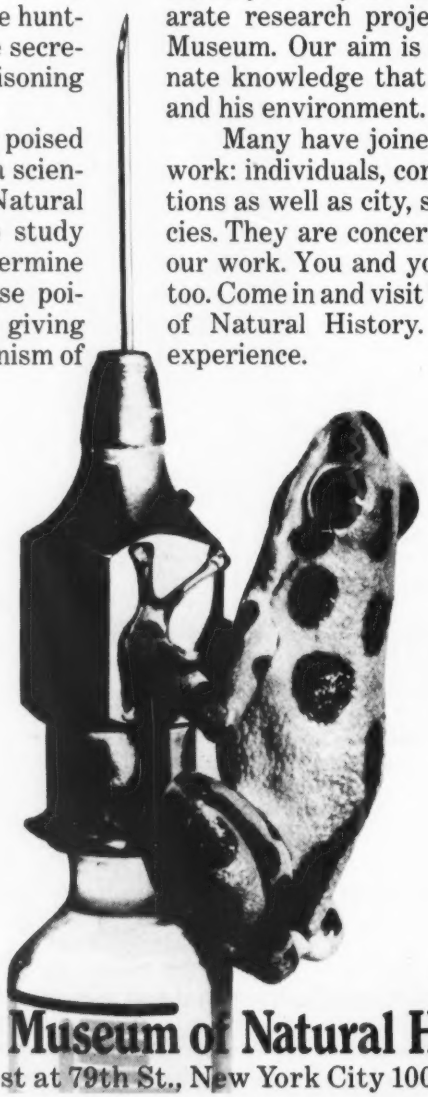

The American Museum of Natural History

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NY 11/4

tually sampling a panoply of other substances, but certainly no junkie is evident in his collective demeanor. Only the slash of scar I notice on his wrist troubles me.

During lulls in the show Billy tells of a film project he and friends Dean Stockwell and Jack Nicholson concocted, an enterprise abandoned for its tricky timeliness. *Billy Gray for President* was to be a satirical indictment of the electoral process wherein computer advertising, popular exposure, picture ballots and automatic public response certify a Bud Anderson victory, prompting a dismayed Mr. Nixon's retaliatory police state tactics. Obviously, their fantasy had become too plausible.

"After inauguration I abolish the office," Billy explains. "Every decision is then made by public referendum, with experts elected to frame and research the issues; there would be no president, no father knows best.

"Everybody has always looked for a big strong leader. Nobody wants any responsibility. They'd rather say, 'Well, *he* knows what's going on.' That's why we're in this mess now, and I think it's the attitude of *Father Knows Best* that got us there.

"If I could say anything to make up for all the years I lent myself to that kind of bullshit, it would be: *you* know best. People should get in touch with themselves, make their own decisions, rely on their intuition and inner resources."

Taking a breather, we tour the wooded property. "Every so often I remind myself how incredibly fortunate I am to have this place," Billy reflects, "the house, creek, a temperate climate year 'round." He loosens up with some exercises derived from *arnis*, a Philippine martial art. On a yellowed clipping tacked to the kitchen wall a line-drawing of Meher Baba or somebody announces: Don't worry, Be happy. Billy doesn't, and is.

Back inside I ask him if he's always maintained such a positive outlook, if he was never dispatched to the depths, driven to seek release. There's that wrist. And he tells me about the marriages.

The first, to an Italian exchange student with the American Field Service, dissolved early amid official intercontinental red tape and Billy's being introduced to his next wife. "It didn't end as abruptly as it sounds, but. . . ."

The second woman, Helena Kallianiotes, was Greek, a belly dancer and actress. "We were together eight years, married the last four. All we did was argue. I'd worked hard at acting and looked forward to a long vacation on the residuals. I wanted to sail around the world, even built a boat, or seven-eighths of one. But she never really went for that. She was very ambitious and projected her frustration onto me, urging me to resume my acting career, out of fear or anxiety over her own, maybe, and I was perfectly happy just living along. A mutual disrespect evolved, yet we were attracted to each other physically. When your nuts take over for your brain, it does bad things. You stagnate, die by degree. So I never got to finish the boat, there was no purpose, nothing I was excited about or carried along by. That's the worst time there is."

The divorce became finalized around the time Dennis Hopper invited Gray and Stockwell and friend Russ Tamblyn down to Peru to participate in *The Last Movie* late in 1970. It marked a turning point. "When you want someone to change, you're not the right person. We were both being unfair." Kallianiotes, who had played the neurotic hitchhiker in *Five Easy Pieces* and later Raquel Welch's skating adversary in *Kansas City Bomber*, subsequently channeled into the whirl surrounding Jack Nicholson, whom Billy,

"Oh, that," he says, looking at his scar. "That's where I tried to kill myself." He then howls with laughter

voicing regret, hasn't seen in a few years.

He accepted another role, that of an abstinent dealer in *Dusty & Sweets McGee*, the 1971 fictional documentary about heroin addiction. "The subject was important, not treated well or accurately previously, and familiar to me." Oddly, critics dismissed the film for its "unsatisfactory ambiguity" and "harsh romanticism." Then there was *Werewolves on Wheels* (cringe), deemed by one reviewer "an amalgam of *Macbeth*, *The Wolf Man* and *Easy Rider*, too metaphysical for the exploitation market." Speedway is vital and exciting but as yet not lucrative, and the life-affirming California figs Billy feasts on don't grow on trees, figuratively speaking. *Rebel* offers don't come along every day, either.

Billy was determined after the divorce to be "scrupulously honest in all relationships," avoiding sexual hazards. "I live a rather celibate life, more than I'd like, but also treasure my aloneness. We never had children, and I'm glad, I take some pride in the fact; it would have been a disaster in our situation. Kids are a real responsibility, to be lived with and not run out on. I want to have children, and someday will, I'm sure." He seldom goes out, sees few films, listens to Bach and Vivaldi, and, for four or five years now, has devoted himself almost entirely to racing—doing innovative work on the bikes, designing and constructing his own protective gear, practicing constantly. Speedway for him is "closer to high art than to cheap thrills, and eminently theatrical, like show business, only for real. The arena feel is very intimate. It's rough, requiring thought as well as force, balance and throttle control, yet really very delicate, almost a ballet under power."

Billy's hope is that speedway, highly specialized among styles of motorcycle racing and very popular in England, Europe and Australia (as it was here in the '30s and '40s when socialites remarked it au courant), will soon burgeon beyond its southern California strongholds into a nationwide phenomenon. Indications confirm this expectation. Costa Mesa, the original of four tracks currently flourishing, attracts the largest weekly draw—10,000 persons, non-cyclists predominating—of any motorcycle event in the country. Total winnings available in one season exceed the $100,000 hauled in by the AMA Grand National champ in a year. Television coverage has been produced in Canada and a similar project's release is imminent here, its pilot having already sparked moneymen's attention. That kind of exposure could enable Billy to contract a major sponsor (cigarettes need not apply) that would provide bikes, a van, pit crew and mechanic—expenses that now cut sharply into the meager earnings of contesting racers. "I'm optimistic about it all," he says. I know.

The scar. Not cool, but I have to ask.

"Oh, that." Brightness drains from his brow. "That's where I tried to kill myself," he says, almost inaudibly.

He then howls with laughter. It all comes clear. The knobby whorls of another bike's tire ripped across his wrist after a fall during a recent race, requiring skin grafts. It is but one of many injuries he has sustained—mostly sprains, bruises and scrapes, but also a collar-bone separation. "Believed me for a minute, didn't you?"

"I'm learning all the time," he assures me. "I love mistakes, because they're an advancement. I know that much more about the limits of where I can go. I don't mind falling. Ever."

I believe him. Billy knows better. The eternal son should make some kid an ideal father. ●

Some like it hot

Hondo Crouch bought himself a little old Texas town, where he holds the world's only chili cookoff for women

By Douglas Martin

"So order up another round
and let your soul flow free.
It's fun drinking beer in Luckenbach
and a lovely place to pee."

—song by an unknown composer

Hondo Crouch says he isn't right sure why he bought the town of Luckenbach. "I used to write a column for several newspapers," he recalls. "It was a make-believe column about a make-believe town filled with make-believe people. I fell in love with that make-believe town and somehow this turned out to be it."

Nestled in the heart of the rolling Texas hill country a few miles from the Pedernales River, Luckenbach is surrounded by stands of cedar, mesquite and cypress. The town's population oscillates between 6 and 28, not counting the myriad chickens, raccoons, squirrels, armadillos, foxes and wild turkeys that prowl the landscape. "It's a magical, mystical place which kind of floats through space," sighs Luckenbach resident Cathy Morgan. "Once you've come here, you just find yourself wandering back again and again."

Hondo, 59, bearded and habitually clad western-style (including well-worn kangaroo-skin boots), purchased the town four years ago. "I don't know how much I paid for it or how much I owe on it," he claims. "I ain't no businessman." What he is, he says, is an "imagineer"—a guy who imagines things. For example, Hondo (who makes his living ranching) dreamed up the idea of celebrating the town's centennial every year; last year he dubbed the event a "World's Fair" and a reputed 12,000 people came.

Each fall, as the sumac turns flaming red and the wild pecans shake down an endless supply of sweet nuts to the animals below, a very special event occurs in Luckenbach. The affair is a woman's only chili con carne cookoff, called the "Hell Hath No Fury Like a Woman Scorned Chili Bust." The object of the contest is to impress the palates of nine female judges that one's chili recipe is the most tasty, aromatic and seductive that can be fashioned by a Texas woman. The bust began as a reaction to a historic prohibition against women cooking in the state men's contest. "Male chauvinists cannot cook in Luckenbach," patly asserts 30-year-old Diana Hahne, formerly city manager until she moved on to run a domino parlor in nearby Fredericksburg.

This year's chili bust attracted a record 47 contestants, all eager to slave over a pot of steaming "red," as chili is reverently known in Texas. Hundreds of kibitzers came, too, many to participate in washer-pitching, egg-tossing and hat-stomping contests, and some just to enjoy ice cold beer in the brilliant Indian summer sun.

Charlie Fowler of Austin, whose family has long been famous for its fiery chili, tried to explain Luckenbach's attraction: "Most everything is so urban today. Where else could you drink a beer and have a chicken sitting on your table?" Mr. Fowler, who owns an ancient fire truck, is Luckenbach's official fire department. "Fires are scheduled in Luckenbach, because we can only get up here certain days," he confides. In fact, the whole town "is on Wednesdays closed," according to a prominently displayed sign.

Luckenbach consists of a saloon-general-store-post-office complex, dance

ILLUSTRATION BY DICKRAN PALULIAN

hall, blacksmith shop, a couple warehouses, three outhouses, a broken-down molasses press and one parking meter. Parking meter transgressions, incidentally, are strictly enforced. A plaque that used to hang in the saloon succinctly told the town's past - "A brief history of Luckenbach: Founded around 1849, I think. Moses." In truth, the town was founded by Albert Luckenbach, an itinerant preacher from Germany, who later founded Albert a few miles down the road. (He then apparently ran out of names.) This German heritage is taken seriously, according to Hondo, who breaks into German upon occasion. "When we celebrate Mexican Independence Day, we'll have sauerkraut enchiladas," he winks.

Enchiladas aside, chances are that sauerkraut won't find its way into honest Texas chili. But if such dastardly mischief is ever worked, it will come a damn sight sooner than beans. The pinto and its cousins are anathema to chili cookers in the Lone Star State and are served on the side, if at all. Ms. Hahne, who refers to herself as a "sunshine cowperson" (cowboy is sexist, she sternly admonishes), says, "Putting beans in your chili is the greatest sin you could ever commit. Sometimes olives, sometimes spinach—but never, never beans."

"What then makes the perfect bowl of red?" a visitor to Luckenbach wondered. "You can't say the ingredients. You can put just about anything in and get good hot chili," said Dotte Leyendecker, who placed seventh at Luckenbach last year. Not so, says Margaret Snipes, 1973 champ and a native of San Antonio: "I use nothing but the best ingredients, usually rump roast for the meat." (Mrs. Snipes, in fact, claims that each time she competes in a chili cookoff she spends $150 to $200.) Sharon Standish of Houston also uses only top-grade meat, normally rib-eye steak. But the path to victory lies elsewhere, she maintains: "The key to great chili is drunk judges. If they're sober, they can't even eat all that chili."

Most Texas chili recipes seem to contain meat, garlic, onions, Mexican corn meal, chili peppers, spices and sometimes tomato sauce. The proportions, mixtures and added ingredients vary immensely. Recipes are closely guarded secrets, shared only with one's immediate family if domestic relations are especially cordial. Mrs. Snipes says a woman's touch is particularly necessary in choosing ingredients. "Men put such weird things in chili," she observed, "like possum tails and hog heads. One guy at the men's contest didn't even bother to take the eyes out of his hog's head. He needed a woman. Women are so much more sensible."

Chili heads, as chili cooks and connoisseurs happily identify themselves, are hospitable folks. A Yankee interloper, wandering among the caldrons of simmering red in order to sample feminist sentiment and chili con carne, found it impossible not to have a cold beer constantly in hand. Phyllis Hoover of Dallas even gave away shots of tequila with tastes of her succulent, brown-colored "coal miner's chili." Throughout, she stoutly maintained that chili cooking is a feminine art, bragging, "None of my husbands never cooked chili. They all loved mine. All five of 'em."

Hondo also claims to espouse women's liberation. "Women's lib," he grins, "means that women should have the right to mop the floor, cook the meals, milk the cow and we'll let them have our babies." Moreover, the self-appointed foreign minister of the "Principality of Luckenbach" admits that feminism has gradually changed the face of the town: "A friend of mine says he even lets his wife ride up in the front of the pickup with him now. He'd sure hate for her to get spoiled, though, riding up there with the dog and him."

One judge patted her stomach and said, "We're not pregnant, we just look that way"

Expectedly, the contestants in the recent chili cookoff harbored a sharply different viewpoint. Allegheny Jani Schofield, whose chili placed second, retorted that "women's lib should be called men's lib. Men didn't used to run around drying their hair with electric hair dryers, putting hair spray on it and cooking chili." One of the most popular features of the day, in fact, was a beauty contest to choose "Mr. Luckenbach, the prettiest man in town." Over 30 men signed up to strut across the grassy stage, as a female emcee commanded, "We want you all to take one step forward so we can look closely at your bodies."

Gimmicks also abound at chili cookoffs, but can't have any influence on judges who know a particular chili only by its number. (There is a separate category for showmanship, however.) One group of three women cooked a concoction called "Kiss Me Chili." Periodically, they lined up with posteriors facing the crowd, hiked their skirts, and bent over. Each had one word of the name of the group's chili colorfully emblazoned on the rear of her bloomers. Another group from San Marcos used what they said was an ancient Hawaiian chili recipe, affected Hawaiian costumes, and passed out bright-colored paper leis at their booth. A sign read: "Good chili is great, but a 'lei' is even better."

Among the most popular chili cookers were Ophelia Wurstbottom and Claudine Clutchbutt, who cooked "Root'n toot'n two ball compound cathartic chili, guaranteed not to rip, burn, churn, ache, shake, break or tear at the heels." Ophelia, a former rodeo clown whose real name is Shorty Fry, was overheard remarking, "The reason I chew tobacco is because when I kiss my boyfriends I worm them. Chewin' tobacco is the best worm medicine there is."

Despite the day's feminine flavor, one particularly arrogant male managed to make his presence noticed. Ed Paetzel (also known as Chill Lee), the Texas state men's champ, roamed from pot to pot muttering about "what a bunch of foolishness this all is." Mr. Paetzel alleged that the only woman with any idea of what she might be doing was using a variation of his recipe. "Women just don't know how to cook chili," he said. "I don't know about this women's lib bit. My idea has always been to keep them pregnant in winter and barefoot in summer."

Mr. Paetzel further charged that women chili cookers don't use proper meat. "There's only one kind of meat to use in cooking chili and that's prime jack rabbit," he declared. "You can only catch prime jack rabbit during the three-quarters phase of a blue moon during the fourth equinox at 4:57 a.m. at the northeast corner of the 4K ranch between the Guadalupe and Rio Grande rivers." Mr. Paetzel advises "pacing" the jack rabbits and catching them by hand. While apparently no contestants located prime jack rabbit, Joy McMinn of Dallas did use king mackerel she caught in the Gulf of Mexico as chili meat. A small sign picturing a halo over a fish dangled above Mrs. McMinn's chili pot.

Chili judging began at 3:33 sharp in the dance hall. (Throughout the day, everything started at irregular times; the official opening parade through "Downtown Luckenbach," for example, began at exactly 12:13.) Anxiously awaiting contestants and onlookers weren't permitted to watch the nine female judges rate the taste, color, aroma and consistency of the 47 styrofoam bowls of torrid Texas red, neatly arranged according to their num-

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Douglas Martin works for The Wall Street Journal *in Dallas.*

bers.

The pace of the judging was set early by the first lady to sample a spoonful, who exploded, "This chili is hotter than shit!" and grabbed a nearby beer. Between each bite, in fact, the judges scrupulously munched sticks of celery and swigged ice cold beer to prepare their taste buds for the next contestant's pet concoction.

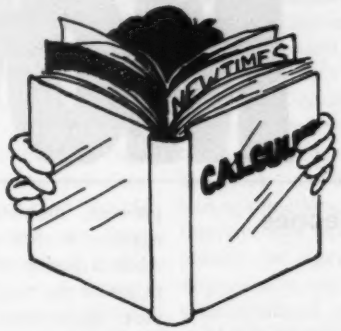
Chili heads agree that chili-judging is at best a chancy business. Said one judge afterwards, "I can't get over how different they were." Responded another, "I thought they all tasted the same." Apart from such sensitive and ultimately irresolvable issues, however, the judging took a heavy toll. One arbiter, patting her stomach afterwards, looked around at her colleagues and said, "The judges all have ulcers. By midnight we'll all be gone. We're not pregnant, you know, we just look that way." Chimed in a friend, "We passed our gastronomical limits."

Announcement of the winners followed laborious ballot counting. In honor of Carry Nation, the fervid prohibitionist (a sign declared, "Carrie A. Nation Says She Can Cook Better Chili Than Any Man"), hatchets were presented to the victors. The top two automatically moved on to the World Series for Chili Cooks, held November 2 in Terlingua, a dusty ghost town in southwestern Texas. There they competed against men.

Allegheny Jani Schofield, who went on to stir male egos and historical precedent by winning the Terlingua contest, took Hondo's announcement of her second place finish calmly. But the winner, Sandy Krause of Flationia, Texas, broke down in a manner befitting the investiture of a new Miss Teenage America. "I can't believe it," she sobbed. "I don't know what to say. I don't even have a name for my chili!"

With the "world's only, women only chili cooking contest" thus officially over for another year and the setting sun a crimson ball in the western sky, the assembled chili heads took time to savor their day's labor. Already, in small conspiratorial groupings, they were plotting subtle recipe changes certain to make them next year's undisputed winner. A breeze rustled through the moss-covered live oak trees and soon the fireflies would be out. In the encroaching darkness, Hondo softly recited from one of his poems:

"We've been tellin strangers
Who come to Luckenbach
'Bout our moon,
But I know they won't believe that
We have such a big moon
For such a small town." ●



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MOVIES

Beyond the Corleones

By Frank Rich

The big, if unsurprising, news about **The Godfather Part II** is that Francis Ford Coppola has not elected to make the easy movie that was his for the asking. This new film about the Corleone clan is only in part a straightforward, linear continuation of its illustrious predecessor: it's less a sequel to the original picture than it is a meditation upon it. Freed almost entirely from the literal constraints of Mario Puzo's heavily plotted potboiler of a novel and armed with the aesthetic and financial freedom that the commercial success of *The Godfather* thrust upon him, Coppola has forged ahead at full tilt to make the movie of his choice. The result is one of the most obsessively personal large-scale epics ever to come out of Hollywood—a brooding and idiosyncratically told work that, unlike most pre-sold, multimillion dollar extravaganzas, is often at its least interesting when disposing of the conventional elements of the "big" American film (i.e., plot, male-female romance, melodrama). While *Godfather II* does begin where *The Godfather* left off, it also begins before *The Godfather* began and ends where *The Godfather* begins; it's a movie that moves outward and inward simultaneously, seeking to explore the earlier film even as it expands its narrative scope to take in three generations of Corleones and almost 70 years of American social history. The film is so dense with events, characters, far-flung locations and ideas that only a filmmaker secure in his talent or an utter fool would set out to assemble it. Though not all his gambles pay off, Coppola is, you can be certain, no fool.

Al Pacino as Godfather in Part II of Coppola's epic: darkness conquers all.

For a movie that runs almost three and a half hours, *Godfather II* does go by at a remarkable clip. It's compulsively watchable because Coppola brings to his material a lucid eye, an extraordinary way with actors and a sure instinct for broad-stroked, operatic theatricality. Here, as last time, this director works within a cinematic spectrum derived from largely Catholic conceptualizations of innocence and sin: his visual and dramatic approach sets up an opposition between the open-air world of the Corleones' tightly knit family life (where the chattel-like wives and children exist at least technically apart from their menfolk's criminality) and the closed world of the Corleone empire itself (where murder is a business proposition to be plotted by men in shuttered, airless sanctums). But by cutting between two stories this time—stories taking place a rough half-century apart—Coppola complicates the pattern. The earlier of his two interwoven tales, in which the young Vito comes alone to the New World in 1901 and ultimately (in the pre-Brando form of Robert De Niro) rises to power in World War I-era Little Italy, dramatizes how the first American Corleone passed from a sunny, innocent Sicilian youth into a dark, tenement-bound maturity as a Mafia godfather. The other, interlocked story of *Godfather II*, which deals with the post-1958 reign of Vito's youngest son and heir, Michael (Al Pacino), extends the first film to show us how the darkness in which Vito took refuge would, a generation later, swallow up the Corleones entirely—leaving Michael lost in the shadows, bereft of even his pseudo-innocent family and the moral self-justification it provides. As Vito and Michael each lock themselves deeper and deeper into the Sicilian cycle of economic consolidation and revenge, *Godfather II* becomes blacker and blacker until much of the film's action seems to be unfolding in dimly lit silhouette. Coppola's stance toward the Mafia has become relentlessly downbeat—no public watchdog can accuse him of romanticizing crime on this occasion—and his stylization of his point of view is often chilling. When the young Vito commits his first murder, he moves right from the scene of his crime, a somber ghetto flat's hallway, into the outdoors, where he finds his wife and baby son, safely sheltered from his "business" actions, sitting on a stoop to

watch the Festa of San Rocco; having moved Vito from the literal and metaphorical dark into the light through action, Coppola then steps in to point up the scene by bringing on Nino Rota's melancholy theme music and dissolving the scene's tag image, of Vito cuddling his child, into black. Later, in the movie's final shot, Coppola reveals the completeness of Michael's isolation by advancing the camera closer and closer to Pacino's still, gravely lined face—leaving the character as spiritually nude (and dead) as he did wiretapper Harry Caul in the last moments of *The Conversation.*

The sum total of *Godfather II*'s double narrative is, of course, the Rise and Fall of the Italian-American Empire, and the two stories comment on each other throughout the film in various ironic ways (often effected by the many elegant dissolves Coppola uses to swing back and forth through time). The Michael Corleone of the late 1950s may be the Dartmouth-educated, war-decorated underworld king of Las Vegas, ensconced in a respectable family compound on Lake Tahoe, but he has brought the Byzantine tribal rites his father practiced in New York out west, just as his father brought them to Lower Manhattan from Sicily. The pull of the Mafia tradition over time, geography and blood is fierce and, in this director's hands, electrifying: Michael's Lake Tahoe estate, like Vito's Long Island compound in *The Godfather*, is nothing more than an elaborate, moneyed version of the sullen brown walk-ups of Vito's first American neighborhood. But there are other ironies, too, that are less helpful. *Godfather II* is a film with a hole in its middle, and that hole is the period between the rise and fall of the Corleones—the period covered by *The Godfather* itself. Part I haunts this film, and, if it didn't exist, *Godfather II* might lack the resonance it often has. If we didn't know that the young Vito would grow up to be the infinitely more complex Brando-Vito, would we find his early history quite so worthy of the extended, methodical treatment it receives here? And if we hadn't seen Michael's own transformation from sensitive young lad to ruthless Don in the first film, would we care about the hardened tyrant that Michael is for the entire length of this one? While it may only make a difference to the six people in the world who see *The Godfather Part II* without having seen *The Godfather*, the truth is that the latter film sustains itself as a self-contained entity while the former, I believe, does not.

At the same time that the first film adds emotional stature to the second, it also, I'm afraid, robs it of some of its thrills. The gangland war that Coppola and Puzo (again co-authoring the screenplay) have devised as an internal plot for the modern sections of *Godfather II* seems a tiresome rehash of the Five-Family wars of *The Godfather*, full of the same kind of betrayals and double crosses (including another one from within the Corleone household itself). Although a wonderfully novel element has been added in the person of Hyman Roth (Lee Strasberg, surely the dandiest gentleman-thug of all time), a Meyer Lansky-inspired Jewish crime czar who is Michael's principal nemesis, this picture's remaining vestiges of the gangster movie genre don't mesh with the ambitions of the film as a whole. One wishes that Coppola had taken this daredevil project a step further by pushing the Corleones' shoot-'em-up intrigues even further into the background than he has; if he had done so, we might have gotten a more satisfying slice of the family's own bloodless, interpersonal wars, which in this movie appear to be shortchanged.

The historical relationship of De Niro's Vito and Pacino's Michael, whatever its thematic values, is just no match for the Dimmesdale-Chillingsworth-esque symbiosis of Brando's Vito and Pacino in the first film. This time, obviously, the father and son can't have any scenes together—and yet that's not the only problem. Stacked against Godfather Michael, this young, Godfather-to-be Vito is a mere puppy dog. While De Niro—who looks vaguely like Brando-as-Godfather and has the raspy voice, too—makes credible the character's transition from happy-go-lucky greenhorn to self-assured "olive oil" tycoon, his role reaches the end of its line just as his performance can begin to become intriguing. This Vito is mainly a footnote to Michael, and Pacino, whose role has now shaken down into that of a hollow-eyed viper and who has much more to do than his male co-star, gets the room to give a performance of such vital, animalistic intensity that he can and does wipe De Niro right off the screen. None of the other family relationships serve to fill this vacuum; while we learn at various points in *Godfather II* that consigliere Tom Hagen (Robert Duvall) is drifting away from his adopted family, that sister Connie (Talia Shire) sets forth on a doomed marriage to a WASP gigolo (a chunky Troy Donahue, returned at last from the dead, though in a bit part), and that Michael's own marriage to outsider Kay (a shrill Diane Keaton) goes on the rocks, we generally see only the edges and heavy climaxes (presented in rushed succession toward the film's end) of these developments.

What *Godfather II* lacks in human intimacy it replaces with sheer cultural sweep. Indeed, if Theodore Dreiser had made movies, they might have looked something like this one: though Coppola may have that novelist's propensity for repetition and occasional sloppiness, he also has his passion for the greatest tides of our modern national life and his feel for social detail. With the aid of production designer Dean Tavoularis and cinematographer Gordon Willis, who repeat their *Godfather* chores, Coppola has, in the Vito sequences, painted a stunning panorama of melting pot America. The herding and processing of the immigrant masses as they arrive to the welcome of the Statue of Liberty and the seething Little Italy of tiny shops, threadbare apartments and exotic dialects (all subtitled) become fluidly realistic tableaus that bring the past to throbbing life. When Vito strolls through this clamorous landscape, we have no trouble understanding his desire to rise above its mean streets and anonymous denizens—and to that extent his aspirations, if not his methods of fulfilling them, reflect those of all the peoples who stepped onto the shores of urban America in the early part of this century.

But more important than the way in which the Corleone experience reflects the bromides of an American experience is the way in which it reflects its perversities as well. Coppola sees and documents a commonality between this Mafia family and the hideous side of a society: the Corleones' way of doing business is linked in the film's modern sections to the American way of doing business (and, as we all know, the business of America is business). When Michael goes to Havana in 1959 to expand his Vegas hotel-gaming holdings, he shares his audience before the Cuban dictator with equally venal representatives of American oil, sugar and communications conglomerates, not to mention a U.S. senator. When a Mafia hitman knocks off a rival Don in the presence of federal marshals and national TV cameras, only to be slain himself by another assailant, we recall not only the shooting of real-life Mafia chieftain Joe Colombo but a certain pair of grisly murders in Dallas. ("If history's taught us anything," says Michael, "it says that you can kill anybody.") When he appears before the Kefauver committee, Mi-

chael's prepared patriotic statement of innocence and stonewalling answers to hostile questions force us to remember Senate hearings into another, more respectable form of organized crime during the summer of 1973. That's why the most showy historical spectacle that Coppola has devised for the film's modern sections—the overthrow of Batista by Castro's revolutionaries—becomes, in a sense, *Godfather II*'s truest climax; as Michael makes his escape from Havana through a churning, deafeningly pitched montage of nocturnal rioting, looting and popular celebration, he becomes a stirringly emblematic representative of vicious capitalism (whether Mafia, ITT or CIA) in at least temporary and possibly fateful rout.

Coppola's intended catharsis—where, in the film's waning minutes, he takes us briefly back to the setting of Part I, the Long Island compound of the 1940s, and pinpoints a moment when all the second-generation Corleones were at the threshold of their destinies—is almost as hair-raising, in that it suddenly and viscerally forces us to confront *The Godfather* and some of its long deceased characters. But terrific as the scene is, it doesn't bring the whole enormous drama around full circle. By the time we reach this payoff, Coppola has expanded his vision and ours too far beyond the Corleones to rein us back in with them again. This family can no longer contain the entirety of the director's imaginative outpouring, which is why the text of their personal history, which dominated the first film, is in the second dominated by its subtext, the larger social canvas against which their history unfolds. The flaws of *The Godfather Part II* are exhilarating because they are creative itches which indicate that Coppola's talent is still a growing one—one that cannot be satiated even by the vast expanse of this most extravagant of modern American film sagas.

I have always thought that Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur's roaring twenties' comedy about two-fisted Chicago journalism, **The Front Page**, was, like Coca-Cola and *Monopoly*, one of the few industructible artifacts of modern American culture. The source for two movies, the inspiration for countless others, a permanent fixture in the repertory of our professional and amateur theater, this rock of a play has withstood every assault for over 40 years: its verbal horseplay remains fast and fresh; its plot, if a tad too contrived by current standards, suffers not from the curse of sentimentality that has dated the other commercial comedies of its generation. Indeed I had figured that the only thing that could kill *The Front Page* would be the death of the newspaper industry itself—but then again I didn't take Billy Wilder into my calculations. With the collaboration of Universal Pictures and his longtime screenwriting partner, I.A.L. Diamond, this unreconstructed son-of-a-bitch of American film directors has succeeded where lesser men have failed: he has actually found a way to kick the life out of this old theatrical warhorse.

Wilder and company have looted the Hecht-MacArthur script for their own cheap purposes and the end product is probably vulgar enough to earn them a tidy fortune for their efforts. While *The Front Page* may one day rise again, it'll be hard for those who see this version to shake the memory; the innocence of a sunny literary confection has been violated, and that's something that can't be undone. Certainly Wilder has every right to tamper with the original—Hecht and MacArthur's words are not chiseled in stone—but what's disturbing is that every change he's made is both tasteless and for the worse. Taken collectively, these alterations cut right to the sore spot in Wilder's long, and not undistinguished, career; he just doesn't know when to lay off the nastiness. When there's been a method to this director's misanthropy—as in his four postwar films that dealt, not unsympathetically, with the degradation of women by men (*Some Like It Hot, The Apartment, Sunset Boulevard* and *Kiss Me, Stupid*)—he has reached hilarious, even classic, heights; but in those films that lack such a focus (*One, Two, Three, The Fortune Cookie*), Wilder lashes out as indiscriminately as a dog with rabies and the audience is left to ponder aimless puerility and crassness that is presumably meant to be its own reward. This filmmaker's most reckless variety of iconoclasm sits on the Hecht-MacArthur script as pepper might on a banana split.

Wilder and Matthau making *The Front Page*: crassness as its own reward.

Though he preserves the work's story and the preponderance of its characters and construction, Wilder has tried to shovel into *The Front Page* every snide wisecrack he can, with special attention given to bathroom jokes (a character even pees in his pants) and sniggling sexual asides (a running gag about a Chinese whorehouse, of all things). He goes so far as to have the whizkid-boy reporter Hildy Johnson (Jack Lemmon, neither boyish nor credible in the role) tell legendary managing editor Walter Burns (Walter Matthau) that "the only time you get it up is when you put the paper to bed"; this time around one of the police-beat cronies, the anal-retentive Bensinger (David Wayne, doing his best), turns up as a raving queen. Since Wilder could not turn Hildy into a woman (Howard Hawks already did that, to wonderful effect, in his 1940 *Front Page*-adaptation, *His Girl Friday*), he decided instead to build up the relatively minor character of Hildy's fiancee, Peggy (Susan Sarandon), so that he'd have at least one female character, however inconsequential to the action, to dump on. As a result, this *Front Page* backs into such unpleasant episodes as one where Burns tries to break up Hildy's engagement by telling Peggy that her intended had once been picked up for exhibitionism—a cruel trick that turns the good-natured monomania of the managing editor into something ugly and that reduces Peggy, who is shown to buy the bait for a few minutes, into a stupid and callow-hearted ninny. It's a measure of the wrong-headedness of Wilder's conception that Matthau, a foolproof actor in a foolproof part he was born to play, only gets about half of his laughs and that four high-powered character actors playing reporters (Allen Garfield, Charles Durning, Herbert Edelman and Dick O'Neill) give the most forgettable performances of their careers. Only those cast members who have roles outside the film's central newspaper world (Vincent Gardenia's sheriff, Martin Gabel's Viennese shrink, Austin Pendleton's wimp of an anarchist, Paul Benedict's process server and

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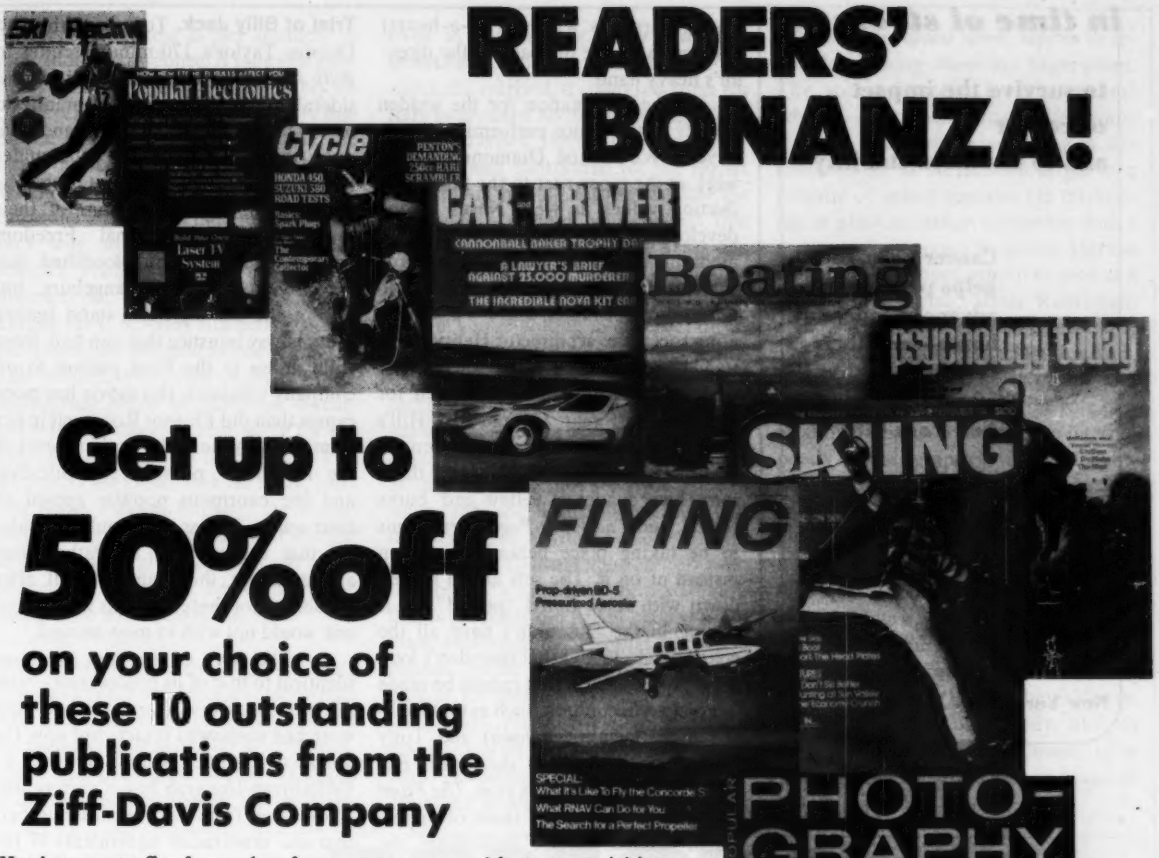

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Carol Burnett's whore-with-a-heart) manage to escape the back of the director's heavy hand.

The explanation for the sodden quality of the major performances goes beyond Wilder and Diamond's handiwork at the typewriter to the film's production values as well. Never having developed a fluent visual approach to his medium, Wilder has finally surrendered that directorial prerogative entirely to the studio mechanics, and it's a humiliating spectacle: art director Henry Bumstead has given this film the exact look of the Christmas release he designed for Universal last year, George Roy Hill's *The Sting*. The whole shebang—even the gratuitous chase scenes—unfolds in those same hazy shades of yellow and burnt sienna, and *The Front Page* often seems to be taking place behind the screen instead of on it. The sets are so loaded down with sepia-tinted "period" (as if people in the '20s didn't have all the colors we do today) that they don't look lived in—a criticism that cannot be made of great art decoration, such as that Richard Sylbert (in *Chinatown*) and Tony Walton (in *Murder on the Orient Express*) have provided this year. *The Front Page* is wrapped in the cloak of impersonal, canned interior decorating; the atmosphere tends to swallow up the actors and make them look and sound canned, too. Wilder and Diamond have reinforced the film's visual tone in their screenplay by outfitting a number of the original Hecht-MacArthur lines with self-conscious references to '20s events and personalities (including a mention of Ben Hecht himself); each such instance calls attention to the fact that we're not in 1929 at all, and there's at least one case where the insertion of a pointed proper name destroys one of the property's most famous laughs. As if this weren't enough, Wilder and Diamond throw in some '70s topical jokes for good measure, notably an inane turn of the phrase "twisting slowly, slowly in the wind" and a dim-witted epilogue sequence that manages to bring in such jarringly alien elements as health food and *The Joy of Sex*. You'd think that these men would have had the good sense to go with the surefire laughs *The Front Page* hands them on a silver platter, but, even at this late date, Billy Wilder cannot resist the temptation to substitute leering for satire and noise for fun.

When show-biz personalities start to believe their own hype, the result can often be a pompous exercise like **The Trial of Billy Jack,** Tom Laughlin and Delores Taylor's 170-minute sequel to *Billy Jack*, their more modest and considerably less windy populist manifesto of 1971. These days this husband-wife duo (they star, produce and, under pseudonyms, write) are not only explicitly equating the traumas of their much put-upon, fictional Freedom School to the real-life bloodshed that befell Kent State or Orangeburg, but they're also staking out a stand against every newsy injustice they can find, from child abuse to the Ford pardon to oil company villainies; this movie has more causes than did Eleanor Roosevelt in her prime. Given the know-nothing level of the Laughlins' political sophistication and the enormous popular appeal of their *oeuvre*, I guess one should be grateful that they're with us rather than against us—i.e., they lean to the left, after a fashion—for these are folks with whom one would not wish to mess around.

The story of this film is almost identical to that of its predecessor— with all the movie-western cliches and wretched sentiment intact—but now the narrative has been padded out with an Ed Sullivan-like grab bag of variety acts. These range from stagy musical numbers that are multiracial equivalents of the grand finales of the old Garland-Rooney pictures to long mumbo-jumbo mystical sequences that only a Kahlil Gibran devotee could find riveting. *Trial* goes off on so many tangents that whole subplots never get resolved, and there's nearly a two-hour wait before our half-breed hero sheds his Clark Kentish mantle of nonviolence and karate-kicks the shit out of a bad guy. For a film that claims to espouse such simple virtues as love and peace, *Trial* positively reeks of money and materialism. The Freedom School itself, now decked out with its own recording company, TV studio and "Nader-like newspaper and magazine," seems designed to feed a young audience's appetite for ever larger and more expensive toys. The booty of success shows up in the filmmaking, too; the recurring aerial photography over and around John Ford's Monument Valley seems to serve no larger purpose than to flaunt the film's bloated budget in our face.

Except in a flashback bit in which Billy Jack is witness to a My Lai-like massacre in a Vietnam that looks suspiciously like California's Orange County, Laughlin manages to retain what might be a sense of humor; this half-breed walks through the film with a cryptic half-smile. In contrast, school principal

Taylor is shameless in her attempts to milk audience response. A rape and gunshot victim, she's always ready to cry on cue—even if she's not about to dirty one of the many spiffy denim outfits she wears in succession throughout the film. When the students turn against her because she argues that nonviolence is the only way to fight back against the school's enemies (which include the townspeople, the police, the National Guard, the U.S. Army and quite possibly the Canadian Mounties), she turns the kids around, Mary Martin-style, by insisting they allow an antisocial 4-year-old with an artificial arm to "be a big guy" by singing them a song. The kid, who picks the guitar with his hook, can't sing worth a damn, but soon the assembled throng is sobbing and self-satisfied again, ready to give peace yet one more chance. It looks like Easter Seals are going to be a little early this year.

For those hardy souls who were dying to know how director-screenwriter Paul Morrissey could possibly follow up his spring spectacle of 3-D disembowelment and necrophilia, *Andy Warhol's Frankenstein*, the answer has now arrived in the form of **Andy Warhol's Dracula**—a quaint entertainment in which the celebrated count sets forth for Italy to broaden his never-ending search for virgin blood. Here 2-D blood vomiting has been substituted for the earlier film's blood spilling, but, by the time the climax rolls around, you can bet that someone is going to drive at least one stake through the telltale vampire's heart. Actually, *Dracula* is a fairly funny film, if you're willing to accept it on its own determinedly trivial terms—terms that spring exclusively from Hollywood camp, comic books and homosexual inhumor. Morrissey's work has settled into a rigid aesthetic pattern that is as austere as that of his mentor's early Campbell soup cans; the flashes of warmth that informed such Warhol Factory projects as *Trash* and *Heat* are gone entirely now, replaced by a calculated, bitchy silliness that is probably the purest expression of utter decadence to be found in current cinema. In the world of these "horror" movies, the people are figurative (and, in the case of *Frankenstein*, often literal) manikins with dubbed-in voices, virtually indistinguishable from one another and so sexually undefined as to be sexless. Their blood never aspires to resemble anything other than finger paint. The sole exception to this general scheme, of course, is Joe Dallesandro; his male-stud persona stands out in this environment as an erection might in a roomful of naked eunuchs. (In this outing he plays an Italian handyman with a penchant for quoting Bronxese Marxist maxims to the count, whom he sees as a symbol of a dying, albeit Rumanian, aristocracy—but why bother to explain?) The cast also includes two film directors, Roman Polanski in a quick cameo and the late Vittorio De Sica in the role of a wealthy patriarch who finds the internal poetry of the vampire's name "delightful." Udo Kier, *Frankenstein*'s mad scientist, has the title role and with it the film's juiciest theatrics; traveling through the countryside with a wardrobe that leans heavily on black feathers, he gets to violate a substantial assortment of necks; when Dallesandro plows through a maiden girl's hymen, this Dracula is there in a flash to lap up the evidence. Morrissey's brand of comedy, like his hero's favorite liquid nourishment, is, as I assume you gather, strictly an acquired taste.

MUSIC

Trade Record Reviews: "We like to look on the bright side, even if there isn't one"

By Janet Maslin

A new group named Sparky was foisted upon the record-selling, -promoting and -playing world several weeks ago, via full-page ads ("Listen to the SPARKY SOUND!") in the music trade magazines. The ad, which featured a photo of four excessively dimply preteens wearing spotless white pants, football jerseys and the Dry Look, plugged "Their Smash Debut Hit!!!"—a version of a song from the 1930s. Sparky's single was then promptly reviewed by these same trade papers that had carried the ad. *Billboard* praised its "cute, catchy arrangement that should appeal to kids of all ages," *Record World* said the song had been "given a new face a la contemporary standards for younger AM listeners," and *Cashbox* seemed to like it, too.

"You'd be surprised," remarked an editor of one of these three influential weeklies. "It wasn't nearly as bad as it could have been." It was pointed out to him that the compliment seemed rather backhanded, and he then countered by explaining his magazine's policy regarding record reviews: "We try to look on the bright side, even if there isn't one."

Granted, most capsule-length record reviews, even in non-trade publications, have a ring of futility: the space limitations barely allow the reviewer room to describe the album or single, let alone evaluate it or establish the least bit of credibility. But the trades' brief reviews are, at least superficially, more pointless than anyone else's, thanks to the apparent ban on nay-saying. Negative record capsules appear in the trades with the approximate frequency of snowflakes in hell.

So the obvious question is why trades venture into reviewing at all. The easy answer, as far as I can tell (the people responsible for these things seemed as confused as I am about their basic raison d'être), has to do with geography. Subscribers to music industry publications—record retailers, distributors, radio and TV people, manufacturers, music publishers and "talent"—are scattered throughout the land. They don't receive records nearly as quickly as trade critics do, so the papers help keep them abreast of new releases.

But in that case mere listings would suffice, so there must be more to it. There is: musicians, retailers and trade editors agree that while it doesn't matter in the least what a trade review *says*, it's position is all-important. Will an album be a Pop Pick in *Cashbox*, or only a Best Bet? If *Billboard* lists a single as a Pop Pick, it is predicting an eventual chart position between #1 and #30, while a Recommended single is only

expected to land above #100. A Pop Pick album in *Billboard* is slated to make the Top 100, while a Spotlight album will presumably hit the pinnacle. An album, single or "sleeper" reviewed on the cover of *Record World* has that magazine's highest endorsement as a "hit," while only "picks" are reviewed inside.

No matter how crucial the logistics, a list would probably still suffice. *Variety* (which, according to one former employee, "missed the boat on pop music about 25 years ago") does just that, thereby offering the most useless notices in the business. It simply reels off the week's releases in dully predictable order, introducing the artist in an idiosyncratic sentence or so ("Kiki Dee is a strong British rock chirper") and then simply *naming*, as opposed to recommending, a few of the album's cuts. But the strict music trades are stuck with a more complicated format that demands a short paragraph per album or single, and are saddled with reviewers whose commercial judgment (which is all these paragraphs, positions, etc., are supposed to reflect) is sometimes hampered by good taste. "Sure, I knew that Telly Savalas thing was a real piece of shit," admitted one writer who had recommended it, "but I also knew it would sell." When Savalas' album of spoken word *cum* heavy breathing was released, the trades universally acclaimed it as "interesting," which, next to "sensitive" and "below par," is about the nastiest thing a trade review will ever say.

So nuance is everything: when *Billboard* Spotlit the live David Bowie album, it also remarked that the record "presents Bowie in his true form" (note the neutrality of the observation), while cautioning dealers to "display this in a visible spot because his name doesn't appear anywhere on the cover." Meanwhile *Cashbox*, which apparently doesn't like Bowie either, described him as a "uniquely gifted entertainer" ("unique" is in a class with "thoughtful," as trade perjoratives go), and noted blandly that "no overdubs or applause, etc., were added to this record which speaks highly of David's integrity." "Integrity" is about as attractive as "sincerity" in these circles.

"You *bet* I can tell a pan in those things," insisted one record company promo rep. "A pan is when they don't say anything good, especially about somebody important–a pan is when they just describe it. Like, 'Here he is, backed by all his famous friends, playing a lot of old favorites we've always enjoyed.' " Keith Moon got notices of that very ilk when he released his first single a month ago: *Billboard* acclaimed him as "hardly a newcomer to the music world," while *Cashbox* asked, "What can you expect when the drummer of The Who gets together with Fanny and cuts this great disk?"

Though all three music weeklies take a similar if-you-don't-have-anything-nice-to-say-then-*find*-something approach to record reviewing, each magazine has a style all its own. Both *Record World* and the slightly less influential *Cashbox* are prone to miserable puns, but while *Record World* has a heavier hand with the bons mots (re a J. Geils single: "The lyrics say 'must of got lost,' but these rockers will be found real soon–by old fans and new"), it also has the lower gibberish quotient of the two. *Cashbox*'s jokes are less frequent but more embarrassing (on Tim Moore's "Charmer": "Tim sounds Moore together [and] . . . charms our hearts away"), and it often spouts absolute nonsense. A Chicago single is "a highly lyrical tune and one which we can all identify with." And Bobby Womack "is not quite sure what the world is coming to for his sisters and brothers, and he sings about it in his soulful tradition."

So *Billboard* is, review-wise, the best of the lot, largely by default and hardly by much of a margin. *Billboard*'s notices have their share of faults, to be sure–since the magazine takes its hit-picking power so seriously, "possibly" is certainly the most frequently used adverb in its lexicon. But *Billboard* can also be occasionally sly (soul singer Syl Johnson "may seem to sound a bit like Al Green in spots . . . actually, he has a style quite his own . . ."), and its format is rigid enough to make for nicely awkward moments sometimes. For instance, reviews of Album Picks must feature a line of advice to retailers, even if nothing genuinely helpful comes to mind. So a Cheech and Chong review cautions dealers to "be careful on in-store play," while one of Johnny Cash ("quite a mixture of material . . .") alerts them to the "interesting family portraits on cover."

Also, *Billboard* can provide wonderful instances of what Steely Dan dubbed "pretzel logic," even in a racket so wildly irrational to begin with. The October 5 issue, reviewing Jackson

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The dimply teens of Sparky, as hyped by the music trades.

Browne's *Late For The Sky* ("*possibly*" his best), notes that "several cuts here . . . are *possible* single hits, but this album really transcends any categorization, which is one of the highest compliments that can be paid an artist." Meanwhile, down the page, an Al Wilson paragraph says his "LP is basically one full of potential singles, which is the way an LP should be."

So much for logic, pretzel or otherwise. If you really want to know what's worth hearing, best go listen for yourself.

*****The Place I Love**, *Splinter* (Dark Horse). Produced, discovered and backed on guitar by George Harrison, these two newcomers from Newcastle offer lovely Beatley harmonies and write evocatively of their urban upbringing. Stunning debut, for both the singers and Harrison's new label.—**J.M.**

*****It's Only Rock 'n Roll**, *The Rolling Stones* (Rolling Stones). Smack in the middle of their geriatric period, their new style has solidified: Jagger's voice is higher, more dramatic, more effete, as Mick Taylor's guitar provides a clear, sensuous counterbalance to Richard's raunch. Marred only by an uncalled-for cover of the Temptations' "Ain't Too Proud To Beg" and some slack spots in the ballads, it's still a massive improvement over *Goat's Head Soup*.—**J.M.**

****Waitress In A Donut Shop**, *Maria Muldaur* (Warner Bros.). When she sang "I'm A Woman" with the Kweskin band in the old days, she didn't need a big chorus chanting "she's a woman" in the background. More an imitation than an extension of her marvelous first solo LP, hence somewhat lacking in spontaneity. The come-on is still there, but it feels more calculated this time, too slick, less genuinely seductive.—**J.M.**

*****Miles of Aisles**, *Joni Mitchell* (Asylum). Recorded during the latter swing of her most recent tour, with both Joni and a band feeling sufficiently familiar with their material to indulge in lots of improvising. Sometimes (on most of the pre-*Blue* songs) it goes well, other times (on recent works) the originals are just too polished to be improved upon. A spotty collection, but even its weaker moments are redeemed by Joni's unassailable vocals.

*****New Skin for the Old Ceremony**, *Leonard Cohen* (Columbia). This is Cohen's most interesting effort since *Songs from a Room*, but try telling that to anyone who still can't abide his nasal whine. Whimsical ("I was Marlon Brando, you were Steve McQueen/I was K-Y jelly, you were vaseline") and ghoulishly witty. But for aficionados only.

******Heart Like a Wheel**, *Linda Ronstadt* (Asylum). Peter Asher's usually overbearing production perfectly counteracts Ronstadt's tendency to turn saccharine in the studio. Bolstered by tough, precise backgrounds, she's at her most languid and sensual here, crooning the kind of country laments she hasn't attempted since her earliest albums. Spectacular versions of "You're No Good," "It Doesn't Matter Anymore," plus the title cut (sung with Maria Muldaur). A quiet knockout.

BOOKS

What do you know?

By Geoffrey Wolff

The Ultra Secret *by F. W. Winterbotham.* Harper & Row (199 pp., $8.95).

Ciphers and codes have been used as instruments of war since 400 B.C., and no sooner had military riddles been riddled, than it became necessary to unriddle them. It is becoming clear that no knot tied by a man cannot be untied. The Russians lost the Battle of Tannenberg during World War I because their cryptography was insufficiently confusing. By breaking the code of the Zimmermann telegram in 1917, by which the Germans bribed the Mexicans to enter the war, the United States was induced to enter World War I. And it has long been known that our cryptanalytic coup against the Japanese shortly before Pearl Harbor enabled us to read our enemy's most privileged messages of war as though they were letters home to an American brother.

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American success at the Battle of Midway would not have been possible without our enormous intelligence advantage.

Now, after 35 years, the story has been told of the extraordinary British luck and labor which made an open book of Hitler's plans, fears, orders and confusions. Throughout World War II the Allies knew the position and number of German troops, airplanes and U-boats. They knew when Hitler planned to invade Great Britain, and when he changed his mind. They knew where to find Rommel in the North African desert. They knew, when they invaded Normandy, that they were expected at the Pas de Calais. They knew about everything other than the German counteroffensive in the Ardennes—the Battle of the Bulge—and they didn't know about it only because no military messages preparing for Hitler's last gamble were sent by wireless.

The Germans, throughout the war, used a coding machine called Enigma. While it was not as failure-proof as the one-time pad system (which effectively uses a different cipher for each message that is sent, at enormous cost in paper, time and effort), it was thought to be utterly secure against man's reason. It created its codes by means of a series of rotating drums that printed out what seemed to be randomly arranged letters of the alphabet. It was estimated that more than a month would be required for several mathematicians to work out the various permutations of a single cipher setting by Enigma, and the machine could create an infinity of them.

By considerable luck, a model of the machine was created, before the invasion of Poland, by a Pole who had worked in the factory that manufactured them, and this made its way to England. (Later, several actual machines were captured.) Then, by persistent brilliance, and the assistance of computer technology, a foolproof machine was created that listened to Enigma, and translated its messages into German. This checkmating device was called the Bronze Goddess.

The author of this story, Group Captain F.W. Winterbotham of the RAF, gives very little space to the solution of Enigma's riddles, or the logic by which the Bronze Goddess functioned. He was not himself a code-breaker, but was rather in charge of delivering the translated messages from the code-breakers to those who needed to see them. He was charged with the mission of protecting the security of the Allies' most crucial secret, called Ultra, and in this he was so successful that Germany never once seriously believed that its ciphers had been compromised.

The security of Ultra was paid for dearly, time and again. During the Battle of Britain, for example, Churchill was told about the Luftwaffe's raid on Coventry hours before it began. He might have evacuated the city, and saved many lives, but the Germans would then surely have realized that their messages had been intercepted. So he elected instead to alert the various defense services of the city to be prepared for a bad night, with the result that Luftwaffe messages, of critical importance during the worst days of the Blitz, continued to be intercepted. In many instances men high in the British air command, and especially

Hugh Dowding, were bitterly criticized for what appeared to be their bizarre strategy during the Battle of Britain, a strategy based entirely on Ultra's revelations, which they could not use to defend themselves.

Also, during the North African campaign, when the Germans were desperately short of fuel and ammunition for their tanks, supply convoys were sent forth from Italy. The Allies, because of Ultra, knew the sailing dates and exact locations of these supply ships, but rather than tip their hand regarding Enigma, they counterfeited sightings by their spotter planes, which were often shot down. The few people privileged to receive messages from Ultra were obliged to disguise the source of their intelligence as intuition (which made many, like Montgomery in North Africa, seem better prophets than they were) and they were not to use its information frivolously, or for small gains. Winterbotham insisted that "no recipient of Ultra could voluntarily place himself in a position where he could be captured by the enemy," which put him head-to-head with Patton, who disregarded the order but made great and profitable use of Ultra, particularly during the invasion of Sicily and his dash to the Rhine.

There is no question that the release now of the secret of Ultra will provoke many revisions of the history of World War II. In Eisenhower's word, Ultra was "decisive," and the question—which Winterbotham anticipates but does not successfully answer—must be, "Why, if we knew so much about the enemy's strength and intentions, did we not finish him off more quickly?" The answer will surely invite psychological as well as strategic analyses. Some commanders—most notably Montgomery—despised Ultra because it was available to other commanders, and most particularly to Churchill, who received his daily briefings directly from Winterbotham. (So much did Churchill come to rely on its estimates that Winterbotham came to suffer the anxiety of any showman who cannot top his previous act: when his intelligence was scanty, Churchill would ask, "Is that all?") Other commanders, rightly impressed by such coups as the sinking of the *Bismarck* (which Ultra made possible) and the pinpointing of the rocket launches at Peenemunde, came to depend on Ultra addictively.

Winterbotham is not a professional writer, and his story is not as elegantly retailed as it might have been. He uses the vocabulary of military logistics more exclusively than necessary, and too seldom ventilates his wit and intelligence. It would have been fascinating to have had more of the kind of throwaway he offers when he comes to Rommel's death: "It was like suddenly losing a pen pal." And when Albert Kesselring finally realized his consuming ambition and was appointed commander-in-chief of Germany's western armies, Winterbotham observes nicely that "Albert had got to the top of the ladder at last, only to find it wasn't leaning against anything." The reason it wasn't leaning against anything might well be as much Ultra's prize as anyone's. For it is Winterbotham's persuasive argument that without complete access to the messages that moved between Berlin and the battlefields of World War II, the Thousand Year Reich might now be entering its forty-third year.

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Good riddance to wife swapping

FINAL TRIBUTE

By Avery Corman

It came into the language as *wife swapping* until somebody got the idea that this was pretty sexist since the husband was also swapped. Then it became known as *mate swapping* or *swinging*. But whatever it is called, I for one will be happy to see it go.

And, on the basis of the available evidence, it appears to be on its way out. It seems this assistant professor at the University of Connecticut, one Duane Denfeld, took a survey and found that an awful lot of free-spirited couples had wound up "disgusted or revolted." The reasons, he reported, were that they had too much guilt or that they found themselves getting involved with non-spouses emotionally or that they were bored or that "it did not live up to expectations," or that the wives were "unexpectedly popular" or that the wives were "unable to take it." Things like that. The important thing is that it looks like the rest of us won't have to be stigmatized with *not* being swingers for much longer.

I mean, who wants to be challenged by the notion that a lot of otherwise conventional middle-class couples in all parts of the country—as the swap propaganda told it—had better communication with their mates, and even better sex with them by periodically swinging with other couples? Not me.

What you have in me is a very conventional person. I'm not even sure how I feel about somebody talking intensely to my wife. I was not always this conventional, though. For a few days back in the '60s I was actually hip. I was single then and writing for a hip publication called *The Realist,* which is published by Paul Krassner. And I would go to Greenwich Village parties, sometimes while I had an article in print, and maybe if I were lucky would fulfill a young writer's fantasy, which was to meet a girl who would sleep with you for your article.

That was then. Now I have recently spent a vacation in a place called Hampton Arms on eastern Long Island, where everybody lives in an efficiency apartment and the kids all play in the sand and jump in the pool and it is a nice "family" place for the conventional middle class, of which I am a member. One wife. One child. Another little one on the way. Not hip.

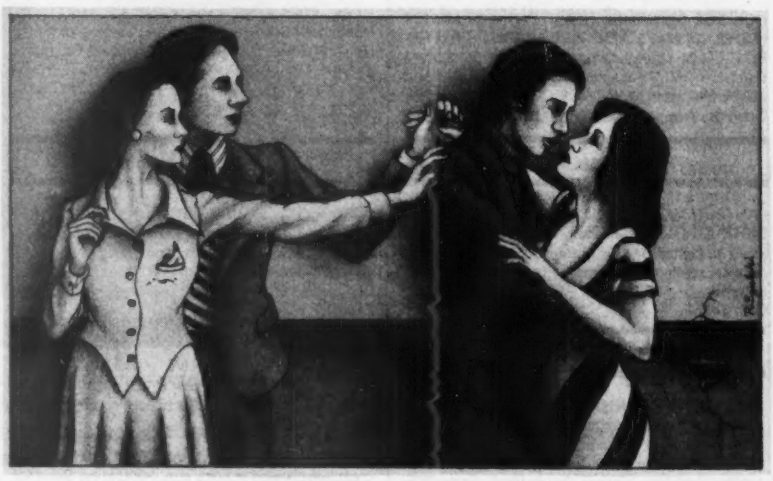
So I view with detached interest the media reports about what the hip people are up to. Whatever they are up to has nothing to do with me. All those bulletins on the media hot line—grass is out, cocaine is in. Or was it pills were out and grass was in? Long hair is out, shaved heads are in. Heterosexuality is out, bisexuality is in. What is all that? Here in our house, hipness is out and we are in—most nights in at home together.

Recently, my wife and I went to a party where single people were coming on to each other as in the old days, and somebody told us that no one wastes time dancing anymore. They just pair off quickly and go off to a room and screw. "Oh, an *orgy*," I said. "No, a *party*," was the answer.

Well, they all get married one day, you say to yourself, and settle down just like me. You construct your little universe. The hip have nothing to do with you anymore.

But what about the others? The ones who are not hip, who got married just like you, settled down just like you, raised families just like you—and began to swing, actually *did it* with other couples? Did they know something you didn't? How do you rationalize them away?

Up to now most of our knowledge of mate swapping has come to us mainly by rumor. But our friend Professor Denfeld determined that mate swapping is not as supportive of marriage as many swappees have claimed. There is sexism, with the men using their mates for their own sexual goals. There is guilt, jealousy, disappointment. And nothing could make me happier.



If mate swapping turned out to be this incredible panacea—a viable way of life for more and more Americans—at the very least we'd have to rethink our view of married life in America. Forget America—I'd have to rethink my view of *my* married life.

So goodbye mate swapping. That I may never have to take a turn at bat comes as a great relief to me. Not only won't I have to make a decision about it, I won't even have to have an opinion on the matter. I don't know about you, but I've got enough on my mind. ●

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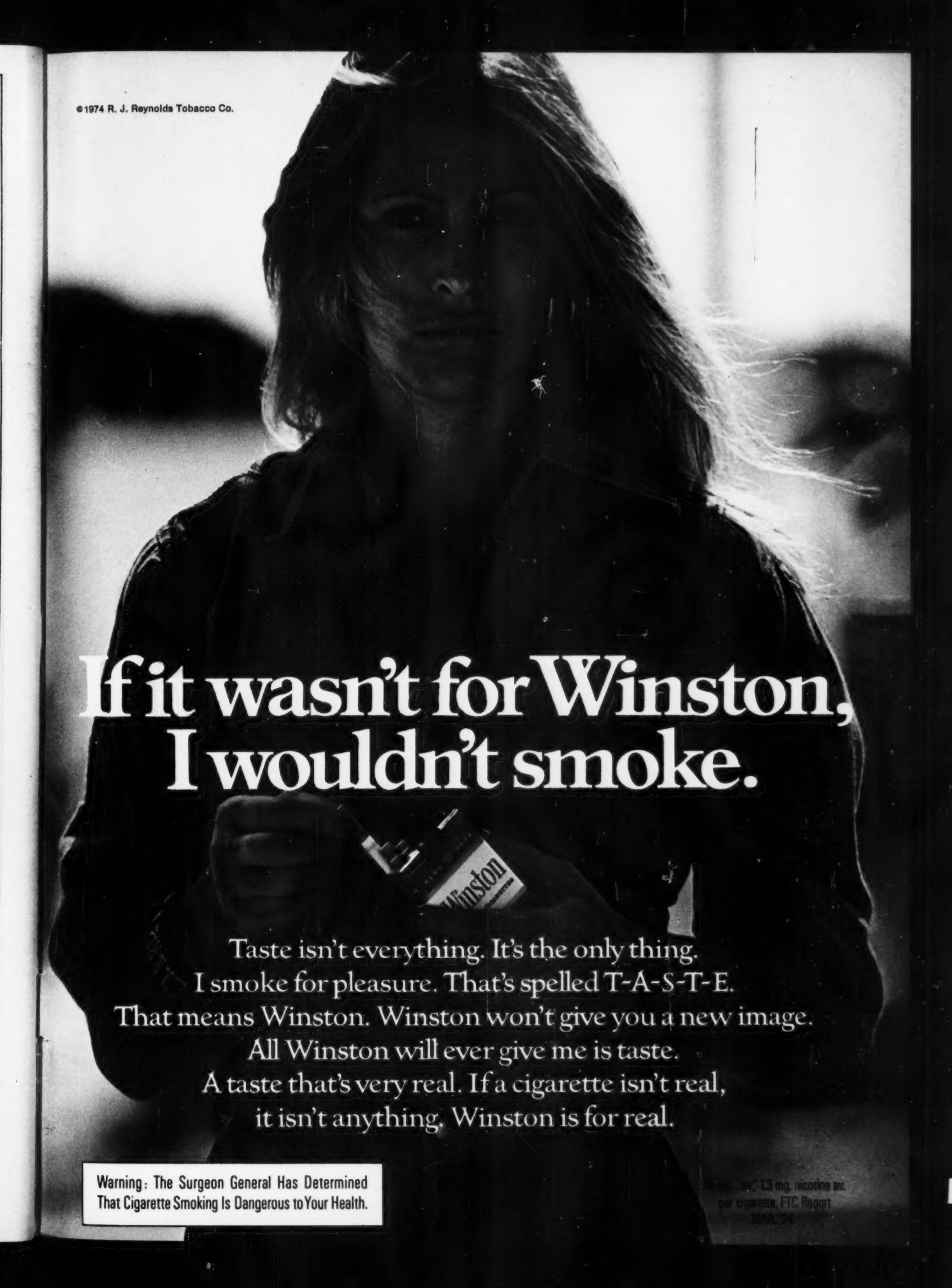
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Perth sends you its Best for the Holidays

We do not have much snow in Scotland. It is said that we gave it to America to make your Holidays brighter.

Along with the snow go our best wishes . . . and our good whisky.

We don't miss the snow. And we always keep enough Dewar's "White Label" over here to toast a few friends of our own. The season would be mighty cold without that!

Authentic.

DEWAR'S®
"White Label"®
Dewar's never varies.

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